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The Silent India



Low-caste Villagers and their Dwellings.

The Silent India

Being

Tales and Sketches of the Masses

BY

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INDIAN MEDICAL SERVICE (RETIRED)

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE.

India, with its over three hundred millions of inhabitants, of different races, castes, creeds, and occupations, and with its varieties of climate, geographical configuration, &c., presents a subject with which no single work, however extensive, can adequately deal. It would be almost as reasonable to write in a similar manner upon Europe, for races in India differ quite as much from one another as they do in the latter continent; and, moreover, there is apparent in the East a cleavage between the urban and rural populations in the same area, which is far more definitely marked than in the West.

There are indeed two Indias: the India of the large towns from which the casual visitor draws his impressions, and which with considerable clamour voices the aspirations of perhaps a tenth of the total population of the country; and the India — the real India — of the silent

millions who lead a simple rural life, contented with the thoughts and occupations of their forefathers, inherited from the distant past. This is the population of which only the experienced Anglo-Indian has any real cognisance, and it is from long contact with this that he principally derives those feelings of kindliness and sympathy which make for friendship and esteem between the races.

We are accustomed in Europe to regard the voice of the great centres of population in most matters as that of the people generally, but it would be unwise to adopt this idea as regards our great dependency, for opinion and sentiment, though unexpressed, may be very strong and deep-rooted, and it is as well to grasp the fact that there is a great gulf fixed between the views of the urban and rural communities on many very weighty and important points. In India, education, such as it is (only ten per cent of the male population, and one per cent of the female population, can read and write), is principally confined to towns; and meagre though this amount may appear, it nevertheless has considerable influence in leavening thoughts and ideas in such localities. But the population in the villages is probably one of the most illiterate and simple-minded in the world.

Mr Yusaf Ali correctly says that agriculture is the basis of all Indian life. At least two-thirds of the people belong to the rural classes, and, in proportion to population, there are probably ten people engaged in the cultivation of land and allied occupations, to one in England. The indirect influence of towns is far less felt than is the case at home, and, except in a few instances, is practically imperceptible some twenty or thirty miles from even a large city. This great silent population, living its own somewhat primitive life, is, as we said, almost uneducated as we understand the term, is deeply conservative in thought, intelligent in the pursuit of its special occupations, and is, moreover, at the present time contented. From it we mostly draw our recruits for the Indian Army and Police. Amid the flood of literature on India we obtain but glimpses of the life, environment, thoughts and customs of these, to-day, politically inert masses, for they come but superficially under the observation of the traveller or student. They are shy and suspicious of strangers, and give their confidence slowly and cautiously; often masking considerable common-sense and shrewdness under an affectation of stupidity very effective in attaining the desired object—which is, as a rule, simply to be left alone.

Officials, such as District Officers and others, who know these people well, have usually little leisure for literary work outside their regular and exacting duties, and, moreover, do not generally grasp the idea that descriptions of details and incidents with which they are so familiarised (and slightly bored) can possess any attraction for other persons differently situated; but the present writer has conceived the impression that many people in England really are desirous of information regarding the conditions of existence in the Silent India, though he realises that they are so utterly dissimilar to those of which the home-dweller has had any actual experience, that the drama of life in our great dependency cannot be presented to such persons in a manner likely to excite much interest, especially in the absence of any acquaintance with its setting. He cannot presume to hope that any efforts of his can materially remove this disability, but in the following tales and sketches (two of which, "An Indian Village" and "A Religious Fair," have appeared in 'Blackwood's Magazine' and the 'Nineteenth Century and After,' and are reproduced with the kind permission of the proprietors) he has endeavoured to draw some pictures of life among the rural inhabitants of India, which may serve to throw a sidelight on some of the ways

and customs of the less known people of the land. Perhaps in extenuation of his temerity in attempting this task it is desirable that he should submit his credentials. As Deputy Sanitary Commissioner, and, later, as Sanitary Commissioner with the Government of the United Provinces, for upwards of a quarter of a century, the nature of his duties necessitated his almost continuous wandering among, not only the urban, but also the rural, classes, in what has been described in a Government paper as the most typical area in British India; and the incidents related in the present little work are all actual facts within the writer's own knowledge, or are based upon well founded and trustworthy information.

The illustrations are from photographs taken by the author's valued friend, Mrs Ada Corbett Wilson, and his daughter Dorothy, and are reproduced with their kind permission.

S. J. THOMSON.

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THE SILENT INDIA.

I.

AN INDIAN VILLAGE.

At the bottom of all the unrest in India to-day is the unsettling of men's minds due to the diffusion of some sort of education and the greater and more frequent contact with the West and its ideas. There are many men who view this solvent and disintegrating process with equanimity, and even satisfaction, as being a necessary phase of transition from a lower to a higher intellectual plane, and indeed that this stage must be gone through is indisputable. But there are others, and these not inexperienced or foolish, who wonder where, when the flood-gates are fully opened, the torrent of educational progress will pass, and with what results. They point out that the source is vast, the water not always free from turbidity, and they fear lest the flood thus let loose over the country may sweep away much

of what has taken centuries to create, and which is worthy of careful preservation. They ask in vain for the designs and plans of the training works and channels through which the mass of troubled waters is to be led and directed, and they altogether deny that there is any indication that such an extensive outlet for pent-up forces is demanded. They consider (to pursue the analogy) that the restricted irrigation operations conducted up to the present time have not been an unqualified success, and have brought to the surface a quantity of objectionable matters, formerly hidden and innocuous, which have caused a distinct decrease in the out-turn of useful produce, and that the raising of the water-table has even led to a lamentable falling-off in the public health.

However this may be, it seems clear that having put our hands to the plough we cannot look back, but must persist in our efforts, relying largely on the comfortable philosophy that we shall muddle out all right somehow in the end. The bantling must cut its teeth, albeit to the considerable discomfort of its nurse. It is our duty, we are assured, to assume "the white man's burden"—an obligation the recognition of which, however, is of comparatively recent origin. Our immediate reward appears to be the prevalence of "unrest," and the extent of this has been considerably enlarged by circumstances over which we have had no control whatever.

A good deal of literature has been recently appearing on this subject. The facts set forth are usually intended for the information of people in England as to the existing state of affairs in our great Eastern dependency, and various remedies are suggested for the improvement of the same. Most of these effusions appear to be written from the standpoint of the dweller in cities and towns, and, so far as they are concerned, the statements are probably correct enough. There really is at the present time a good deal of unsettled feeling in the larger towns and centres of education, and some of this has filtered, through the medium of agitators and seditious publications, into the rural areas, though not, the writer believes, to a serious extent. This is usually termed "unrest"—"a word of exceeding good command," as Bardolph says. Phrases are dear to the proletariat; but whatever may have been the case at one time, it is far too general a term now. It is fairly applicable to that natural sentiment of dissatisfaction with conditions under which the circumstances of life are not as we should wish them to be, and however unreasonable the view may appear, undoubtedly a good deal of the distress arising from plague and famine was attributed to the Government. It is useless to ignore the fact that the rumour was diligently spread, and frequently believed, all over the country, that plague was deliberately introduced to keep down the population, which, it was stated, was

considered by the Administration to be shown by the recent census to be too great.

The average native of India, again, is no social economist, and, if he had his way, would probably not permit the exportation of a single grain of corn from the country. Old people have related to the writer stories of local distress in past times, before railways were largely distributed in India, but they nearly always capped the narration by adding that in years of bumper crops grain was so cheap and plentiful that a man could go to a landowner's granary and take away what he wanted almost for the asking. In their memories they set one time against another, regarding both as dispensations of Providence. Such being the mental attitude of a considerable section of the population, the sedition - monger finds his task sufficiently easy. The connection between the trouble and the Government is not clear to the people, and he supplies the explanation. The statements of such men to their hearers would be received with derision by a European audience; but the case is very different in India.

This general feeling of vague discontent is, as already said, doubtless abroad, and may be correctly termed "unrest." It has been very largely dispelled by the recent Royal Visit to the country, and this striking proof, not only of our intention of remaining in India, but also of the King-Emperor's deep interest in his subjects, has removed very much of the suspicious uncertainty

which is understood by the expression referred to. With improved times it may be fairly expected to subside. It differs greatly from the hostility and organised action of the extremists. Speaking generally, the latter have suffered comparatively lightly from such afflictions as famine and plague, and their attitude must be described by a much stronger term. Although the real unrest may easily develop into a different and more dangerous feeling, at the present time the two conditions may be largely dealt with separately; and whereas in one case a conciliatory and reassuring policy is indicated, and has been clearly enunciated by His Majesty at Delhi, in the other stern repression is called for. Active sedition and temporary discontent are two different phases of thought, and should be differently treated; and this indeed appears to be the view of the administrators of the country at the present time.

The present situation is perplexing and even pathetic. It is difficult for the old Anglo-Indian —even to one who, like the author, has but recently left the country—to realise that recent crimes could have been committed, or to believe that the mass of the people, so docile and amiable if understood, is really seriously disaffected. Doubtless there is a section, intoxicated with ideas we have incautiously inculcated, which furnishes ready tools for a small number of dangerous conspirators. As regards the latter, there can be no question as to the course to pursue; but in

dealing with the cases of immature youths who are their victims, it may perhaps be doubted whether capital punishment is a really deterrent penalty. It bestows a martyrdom—spurious, it is true, but what the neurotic lad seeks. Penal servitude with transportation would largely defeat this object, and in India is a punishment often more dreaded than death.

The desires and aspirations of the advanced party are somewhat nebulous. They know well enough that such a thing as a united India, with its various races, castes, and creeds, is impossible; and if it were a question of coming under the rule of another foreign Power, they would probably (if they had any voice in the matter, which is unlikely) elect to remain as they are, preferring to bear the ills they have to flying to others that they know not of. There is no such thing as an Indian nation; and when this expression is used in political publications and speeches, a cynical smile is apt to cross the faces of those acquainted with the real facts of the case. The area of India is about 1,767,000 square miles, and its total population, according to the last census, was 315,001,099 souls. Size for size, there is probably no tract of country in the whole world presenting greater diversities among the inhabitants. What is there in common between the Bengali and the Pathan, between the Goorkha and the Mahratta, the Sikh and the Madrassi? There are whole races which practically never leave the jungles:

learned in forest-lore, but hardly acquainted with the rudiments of civilisation; and whole tribes, nomadic from tradition and choice, who have never known a home, and of which the men are nearly all thieves and the women nearly all immoral —not from vice, but because their ancestors have never been anything else. Efforts made by the State to reclaim these people, by keeping them in settlements and teaching them trades, have only resulted in ghastly failure, for the people died like wild beasts in captivity, and the well-intentioned but cruel experiments were perforce abandoned. They are all apparently claimed as part of the "Indian nation," panting for progress and elective institutions!

As regards the advanced educated section, the problem seems to be to a considerable extent that of the unemployed. The crowds of intelligent, if somewhat inflated, lads studying at our schools and colleges, have mostly one goal before them—a good appointment, and preferably under Government. Their education has often taught them to despise the calling and status of their fathers, and their nimble brains are seething with vague ambitious thoughts. There is something pathetic about the situation, for only a small proportion can ever attain their desires. The writer advances the opinion with considerable diffidence, that it is extremely doubtful whether the system of high educational tests and competitive examinations is altogether suited to India. For one

reason, reward for success is extremely uncertain. That is to say, in Europe a lad who surpasses his competitors and attains academic distinction may confidently expect to have his talents recognised, and to be gratified by the offer of good employment, but this is by no means the rule in India. The great object of the majority of students is, as said before, to obtain a remunerative post—generally a clerkship. The craving for learning in itself is probably exceptional. Now, however astute and careful the head of an office may be, the selection of young men for many of such appointments is sure to lie very largely with the superior Indian officials in the clerical department, and in practice, unless the greatest care be exercised, the staff becomes more or less a family party, where no claims are considered superior to those of brotherhood. This is the case both in Government and private offices. Disappointment and resentment follow the failure of cherished and legitimate hopes, and among such men the agitator finds ready recruits. It may seem easy to rectify this, but experienced officers know better.

People in England hardly realise perhaps how many important Government posts are, as a matter of fact, held by natives of India; the principle of "la carrière ouverte aux talens" is observed, and practically all the public services are open to them. Still, nevertheless, the supply of candidates largely exceeds the number of avail-

able appointments, and the country swarms with promising lads who could do well enough if only they would direct their energies into channels other than clerical and official. Engineering, medicine, art, forestry—there are many lines in life where a good living could be obtained without interference with caste, or entering Government service. Law has always had a great attraction for them, and the profession is largely over-stocked,—indeed the low-class lawyer and advocate is far too much in evidence. He is clever, but too often disloyal, and most unfortunately monopolises an altogether undue proportion of seats on municipal and district councils. It is difficult for the simple man to understand the procedure of the Courts—some legal agency is necessary,—and in a country where perjured witnesses are numerous and cheap, going to law is very much what an American author describes poker—"a beautiful but uncertain game,"—which appears to have a peculiar fascination for the Oriental. In former times much of what is now fought out in the Courts was satisfactorily and gratuitously adjusted by the village tribunals, and the decadence of these is much to be regretted.

Medicine attracts many youths of good caste and extraction. This might excite surprise, but we may remember that there is an old bond between the healing art and Brahmanism. The writer has a good opinion of Indian doctors as a class, although the requisite decision and nerve

are sometimes absent. A good deal of discontent is born and fostered in Bengal, and to the residents of this part of the country (and indeed to students generally) the Army offers no career.

Technical education is a promising remedy, and the Government is alive to the fact and is dealing with the requirement, but it is uphill work, for manual labour of any kind does not commend itself at the present time to the higher castes, and reports on the subject are depressing reading. There are some who look to the gradual extinction of caste as likely to lead to relief, but, apart from considerations as to whether such a change of thought is from all points of view desirable (which the writer entirely disbelieves), the prospect of any such thing happening on a large scale in the near future is exceedingly improbable. Nevertheless this is the tendency, and probably in the steady encouragement of technical education lies the best hope of removing the difficulty. Time and a suitable course of study may be reasonably expected gradually to loosen, without dissolving, caste ties and prejudices sufficiently to permit of the adoption of forms of employment by the higher castes which they now reject, and this without the extinction of caste itself, or any interference with the religions of the land.

There is undoubtedly a sore on the body politic; the risk is that we may look at it with a microscope (made in Europe) and treat it as if the whole constitution were diseased.

Behind this mass of discontent and nebulous aspiration there are, unfortunately, directing forces—the really serious element in the situation. Government should know pretty well where these dangerous and retiring conspirators lie hid, but they as a rule are cautious and take very little personal risk. An incident—which thing is also an allegory—occurs to the author. Some years ago, a disturbance happened between the religious processions of Muhammadans and Hindus during the Mohurrum festival of the former. There was evidence of its having been engineered by certain leading Hindus, and the actual site for the collision had been arranged. A serious riot ensued, and the Indian magistrate in charge of the proceedings, at his wits' end what to do, ordered the police to fire over the heads of the crowd—a silly procedure. Now it happened that just beyond the struggling mob was a row of tall heavily-foliaged trees, and, to the horror of the official, the volley was followed by the dropping out of this cover of a number of sleek, respectable wounded men. The subsequent inquiry showed that this unexpected "bag" was largely composed of the individuals who had organised the disturbance, and who had climbed into the trees with a view to observing the row from thence without running any personal risk or becoming implicated in the proceedings!

The advanced and educated classes in India have made their voices heard very loudly, and

we know approximately what they demand—for the present. How far are these people entitled to speak with any authority regarding the feelings and aspirations of India as a whole? They are confined almost entirely to the larger towns and cities, and indeed constitute only a very small proportion of the population of these. Let us take a few figures. From the census of 1911 we learn that the total population of our dependency was 315,001,099, of which (deducting the people in the Native States) 77·5 per cent was directly under the rule of the British Government. Of this population, not less than two-thirds are agriculturists or directly concerned in the cultivation of land. We further find that, as Sir Thomas Holderness has told us in his interesting work, 'Peoples and Problems of India,' only ten per cent of the male population and one per cent of the female population can read and write, and not more than one in three hundred has any knowledge of English. Now, what do we know about the thoughts and wishes of this great majority—the Silent India—from which we draw our recruits for the Army and Police, and which pays the greater part of the revenue? Is it desirous of change, and is it, as a body, disposed to regard the gift of higher education as a boon, or to accept its possession as a criterion of merit? The reply of the majority of experienced Anglo-Indians would, it is believed, be in the negative. However much it is to be regretted, there is little

seeking after knowledge at the present time among the fighting races, and that the pen is mightier than the sword is a proposition they are by no means inclined to accept. The wise and loyal old Muhammadan, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan of Aligarh, when he referred contemptuously to the "giz-giz" of the pen, spoke for many more than his own co-religionists. They are far behind the feebler races of the lower provinces educationally, and they are well aware of the fact. To elevate the masses intellectually is a very proper and generous desire, but many think that there is a political side to the question which has hardly received sufficient consideration, and that is that the movement, if too strenuous, may excite a fear in the minds of the warlike races of being brought more or less under the power of others which, however intellectual, they nevertheless despise. Many of the educated reformers who clamour for more power and pay have, it must be remembered, broken with the habits and ideals of their own country, and are regarded by the Hindu and Muhammadan masses alike with dislike and suspicion, and by the proud aristocracy with stronger feelings still. One of the great secrets of our success in India is our impartiality to all classes, and no breath of suspicion regarding this should be permitted to arise.

No wise Government would ignore the reasonable claims and wishes of any of its subjects, and there undoubtedly exists a considerable section

which, while loyal, does desire, with much justice, a larger share in the administration of the affairs of the country; but this ambition is by no means confined to the more highly educated class. For efficiency in administration, it is impossible to eliminate the necessity of a certain amount of intellectual knowledge, but if the standard of this be placed too high, the effect would be to practically exclude the races whose power for offence is infinitely greater than that of those possessing the required qualification. The matter is one regarding which philanthropists and scholars may find themselves in opposition to the views of practical statesmen, and is of grave moment. The difficulty is how to satisfy certain classes without alienating others. The Government is well aware of these facts, and certain recent action was unquestionably called for. We have gone too far to reasonably recede from our position. At the same time, it should be remembered that the principal observed result of the introduction of elective institutions so far has been the appearance in the political arena of a great number of pushing nobodies, glib of tongue, speaking, as Sir Thomas Overbury says, "sentences more familiarly than sense," not of such extraction as commands respect in a highly conservative country like India, and whose principal claim to consideration is the faculty of absorbing education, as the term is understood in that country. The last is no test of character, and experienced officers may be forgiven for re-

garding the whole scheme at present as experimental. Opinions therefore will of course differ on the question of the expediency of granting such extended representation on Provincial Councils. A shrewd and educated Indian gentleman of high position is reported to have said that the masses do not want it, and that nothing will satisfy the irreconcilables. Still, in view of the undoubted material (the adjective is used advisedly) progress of the people generally, the measure, if properly safeguarded, is probably wise. The "sahib," however much liked and trusted, is nevertheless always an alien. But it is sincerely to be hoped that a good proportion of the new representatives elected by the people will be men of real weight and good birth, and, indeed, the natural leaders of the people. The crying want of the country is more reliable and trustworthy channels through which the policy and good intentions of the Government can be conveyed and explained to the masses, and for this purpose it is to the nobility and gentry of the country we must mostly look. With them on the side of British rule, the support of that section of the population which will really count in time of trouble can be relied on. Unfortunately, men of the stamp required are by no means inclined in India to appeal to the suffrages of the proletariat.

In view of the fact that, as said before, two-thirds at least of the population are concerned with agriculture, it may be not altogether unin-

teresting to consider the question of land tenure, and to depict, however feebly, the conditions under which the average villager lives. As regards the first point: in 1793 Lord Cornwallis introduced a permanent settlement into Bengal by which the demand of the State was fixed for ever—a measure the wisdom of which has been largely questioned. Nowadays over the greater part of India a system of periodical settlement has been established, under which the State demand is revised at recurring periods of from ten to thirty years. When the revenue is assessed by the State permanently or temporarily on an individual or on a community owning an estate analogous to that of a landlord, the assessment is known as "zamindari"; and when the revenue is imposed on individuals who are, or represent, the actual occupants of holdings, the arrangement is known as "ryotwari." Under either system there may be rent-paying sub-tenants.

In the surveyed and settled area 47 per cent of the total area is held by peasant proprietors, while 20 per cent is held by permanently settled and 33 per cent by temporarily settled proprietors. It is stated in the last Blue-Book on "Moral and Material Progress in India," from which the above remarks are taken, that the burden of the land revenue per head of population is about eighteen-pence. It is further stated that the British Government takes a very much smaller share of the gross produce than was customary

before the days of our rule, and that the assessments are lower than those that prevail generally in Native States. Increased productiveness, due to private improvements, is considerately dealt with, reductions are made in the case of deterioration, and large remissions allowed on occasions of distress such as that caused by famine. A noticeable fact is the large proportion of the assessed area held by peasant proprietors.

With this brief sketch of the tenure under which he holds his land, we pass on to the consideration of the life of the agriculturist, and perhaps the best plan will be to attempt to describe a village and its inhabitants in Upper India to-day, in an area which the Government of India has described in a recent Parliamentary paper as fairly typical of the whole of the dependency.

Heera Singh is what we should call a small farmer, of good caste, and living in the little village of Muddunpore in the United Provinces, owning his own land of some four or five acres in extent, which has been in his family for many years, albeit it is rather heavily mortgaged to Ruttun Lal, the village shopkeeper and moneylender, on account of the expenses incurred in the marriage of his two daughters some years ago. He has two sons, stalwart lads, who help him in his work, so that his mind is at ease as to the releasing of his soul and its saving from Hell when the time comes for him to be laid to draw his last breath upon the ground and for his body

to be cremated at the burning-ghât. One is very anxious to become a recruit in the "Sirkar's" (Government's) army, but his father needs him on the farm, and parental authority is respected among uneducated folk in India. Old Mehr Singh, the Sikh native officer who has retired and owns a little land in a village a few miles off, is responsible for unsettling his mind, and the lad often trudges off across the fields to listen to the old man's stories of how Roberts Sahib Bahadur marched from Kabul to Kandahar and scattered the Afghan army there. Mehr Singh had marched with him in a regiment which averaged five feet nine in height, and was never tired of relating, with additions as time wore on, the gallant deeds they all performed there. He told of the race up to the guns in the charge at Kandahar, and how a little Goorkha, first up with a Highlander, jumped upon the smoking field-piece and rammed his cap with its badge down the muzzle, shouting "This gun belongs to my regiment," and many other stories to which the villagers listen with breathless interest. The boy had almost run away once when he stood by and saw the old "Subadar," in full uniform and all his medals on, and with his long moustache and whiskers tied behind his neck (for a Sikh never cuts his hair, and must carry cold steel upon his person), come out and present the hilt of his sword to be touched by the Colonel Sahib, who happened to be camping and shooting by the small lake near

the village. The Colonel Sahib had a long talk with the veteran, and said things which brought the fire back to the old man's eye, and nearly sent the admiring lad off to the nearest recruiting station.

Heera Singh has a wife much younger than himself, who, however, sees nothing in the disparity of age, since it is so common in the country. She has more liberty than her sisters in the towns, but has practically never left the vicinity of the village, nor desired to do so, since she was brought with great banging of tom-toms and flaring of torches to her husband's house a long while ago. She had been betrothed as a child, but was not brought to him until after puberty. Once a year, it is true, she has an outing, anxiously looked forward to, albeit with some timidity, when she goes with her husband and relations in a happy, merry party to wash their sins away in the Holy River, and see the wonderful gathering of pilgrims at sacred Hardwar. They are carriage-folk, and own a great canopied cart drawn by two fine milk-white bullocks, with blue beads round their necks, in which she goes in state to local festivities and to see her relations, or to occasionally visit, closely veiled, the village where the weekly market is held, some five miles away, where pins and needles, thread and tape, oval mirrors folding into tin cases, stockings and mufflers with fearful and wonderful stripes, and a great deal of other cheap rubbish produced in Manchester and Birmingham, can be purchased.

She is not devoid of vanity, and the skirt she wears, and the shawl or "chudder" with which she carefully covers her head and face on such occasions, are of the best material from Rampore and Dacca, and elaborately embroidered. Heera Singh himself is rarely seen in gala dress; when he is, he appears with a voluminous white "puggri" on his head, a long purple coat of a strange cut ornamented with gold filigree, and his legs and feet adorned with thick white stockings, far too large for him, and projecting some inches beyond his toes. How he gets them into the red leather shoes with the green patches on the turned-up points, is a mystery.

Poor Lukshmi, it must be conceded, is not enlightened. She regards higher education with misgivings, as calculated to disturb religious beliefs and engender contempt for parents; she views an owl with horror; makes obeisance to the god of fire when she lights the lamps at night; and has conscientious objections to vaccination, as an operation likely to offend the goddess connected with the appearance of smallpox. She has three little children, besides the grown-up ones; there have been others between, but two, fortunately daughters, were swept away when cholera last visited the village, and one, a little boy, unhappily passed away from some unknown malady most probably caused by a stroke of the Evil Eye. She has help, but there are numerous domestic duties which she sees to herself: the

care of the young ones, the cooking of the food, the mending of the clothes, &c. Then the idol must be kept cool by libations of water, probably brought back in bottles on the occasion of the last visit to Hardwar; there are the daily devotions, and the consultations with the priest as to auspicious days for the performance of certain rites and duties; the visits to festivals and relatives, &c., &c. Lukshmi's life is not dull from her point of view, and she is quite content with her position, though she cannot read or sign her name to save her life. She hears of the doings of her European sisters with no envy, but some surprise, but then, as she and her husband pleasantly agree, "all sahibs are more or less mad."

Much ignorant nonsense is spoken and written about the miserable and degraded position of woman in India. She holds the same power and influence which women, as women, exercise all the world over. Such statements are (as Mark Twain says regarding the report of his death) "much exaggerated."

Heera Singh himself can only just read and write sufficiently in the vernacular to keep a check on the machinations of Ruttun Lal the trader, and to carry on a limited correspondence with his acquaintances on scraps of thin brown country paper, weirdly addressed, and incapable of comprehension by any but the local native postman; but he knows his own business very well. His time is spent almost entirely in the

fields, and his system of cropping is arranged to suit the rainfall, which, in Upper India, in normal years, is plentiful between the end of June and the middle of October, with a lighter fall in the cold weather about Christmas. The summer crop constitutes the "khareef," and the winter the "rabi." January and February are largely occupied in irrigating the "rabi" crop, which will be harvested in March and April. This is a busy time,—water is either obtained from wells, or is lifted from lakes in baskets by two or four men, who swing the receptacle with ropes into the water, and then empty it at the higher level into the channel by which it is meant to flow into the fields. It is very hard work, and the method cannot be employed when the lift is more than a few feet. Harvesting is very differently carried out to what it is in England. The crop being cut with the sickle, is carried at once to the threshing-floor, a well beaten-down piece of land in the fields, where the grain is trodden out by cattle as it was in the days of the Israelites, and the winnowing is performed by letting the grain fall from a height on a windy day, when the husks are blown away as the kernels fall to the ground.

May and June are slack months, in which he repairs his house and does various odd jobs for which there is no time in the busy seasons. July is fully occupied with sowing and weeding, and in August and September comes the ploughing for the "rabi." In October he commences to gather in



Irrigating the Fields from Wells.

the "khareef" harvest and sows for the winter crop. The latter work over, he finishes the winding-up of the "khareef," and irrigates the "rabi" until the end of the year.

The "khareef" is the summer crop, and includes various cereals, maize (*Zea Maya*), rice, millets, of which the principal are "juar" (*Andropogon sorghum*) and "bajra" (*Pennisetum typhoideum*, or *spicatum*), pulses, oil-seeds, and fibres. In the "rabi" are included wheat, barley, oats, "gram" (chick pea), peas, lentils, potatoes, mustard, and various pulses. There are special crops, such as sugar-cane, cotton, poppy, tobacco, &c., but these are not often attempted by the small cultivator, though many of the villagers grow a little tobacco for their own use. Rude as is the system, still the principle of rotations is preserved, much intelligence is shown in the selection of the right soil and situation for each crop, and even what strikes a European with surprise, the frequent plan of growing mixed forms of produce in the same field, is no haphazard arrangement, but is adopted as a sort of insurance, so that if one crop fails the other may succeed.

Among the things which probably most strike the traveller on his return home to England after a long absence, are the number of hedges and the general orderliness of things agricultural (which Wendell Holmes has also noted), and, if his exile has been passed in the East, the great size of the horses, cattle, and sheep, and the deserted appear-

ance of the fields. In India the last are teeming with life and colour: men, women, and children at work, or passing along the roads or footpaths, give a bustling aspect to the scene, and the blue and red garments mostly worn by the agricultural women, dotted about among the green crops, give a very bright and pleasing impression to the eye. During the day the village is practically abandoned, and somehow or other there always seems to be something or other to employ the people—sowing, weeding, irrigating, harvesting, and planting out rice. When the crops are ripening, little rough platforms are erected in the fields, from whence boys and men watch these day and night, waging an incessant war against the birds of the air, especially flocks of parrakeets (there are no parrots in India), shrieking all the time, and hurling stones with much accuracy from slings against the feathered marauders.

With his two lusty sons, Heera Singh needs little outside help, but when he does, he pays mostly in kind,—that is, in allowances of flour, grain, and pulses, with an occasional rupee or two. One of his sons guides the oxen up and down the ramp when he is lifting water in a big leathern bag from the well to irrigate his fields, and he usually himself stands above the well and directs the water into the proper channels. This operation is rather complicated, and is very important: the field is divided into little enclosures by means of slight elevations of soil some six

inches in height, and each is irrigated in turn and then cut off by closing the opening in the little dam. He lives literally, as impecunious landlords have been advised to do in England, upon the produce of his own land, for the corn is ground into flour in his own house by the women, the pulses, oils, and spices come out of his own fields, and his simple regular diet consists of little else. Water is his only beverage; the jungle supplies wood for fuel; the tobacco he smokes, and the hemp he uses for his well-ropes, are grown on the farm; and what he sells is for taxes, wages, clothes, and his very limited extravagances. Now and again a great charge, such as the marriage of a daughter, has to be met, but in normal years he usually has little financial trouble, and is seldom behindhand in his payment of revenue. Cattle for milk and labour he possesses: with sheep and poultry he has little concern, for his caste prevents their use as food.

Muddunpore lies in the fields, but is situated on one side close to a grove of mango-trees owned by Heera Singh, under which the village cattle rest during the great heat of the day, after having been driven out in the early morning, by a small ragged urchin armed with a long bamboo stick, to forage on the waste and fallow land in the neighbourhood. The site is well wooded. The "mohwa" (*Brassia latifolia*), a tall, handsome tree with yellow waxy flowers which fall to the ground in April, and are eaten both raw and cooked, throws

its welcome shade over the ground. In some parts of the country it furnishes an important source of food-supply. The flowers are sweet and greatly beloved of bears; the sugar they contain is readily converted into alcohol, and much native spirit is distilled from them. The "mango" often grows to a large size, and its luscious fruit is more important as a source of food than that of all the other trees put together. It bears produce ten years after being planted, and will yield a crop for a generation or more—growing readily in most soils, though the fruit varies much in taste and flavour. In May and June the whole population seems to be eating it, in the same way that they are all munching the sugar-cane in December and January. The "neem" (*Melia azadirachta*) is a slow-growing but shady tree, with narrow leaves, and yielding a small berry, the oil of which is much prized as a medicine. The invaluable bamboo, of which the uses are innumerable; the "sheeshum" (*Dalbergia sissoo*), affording excellent timber; the "babool" (*Acacia arabica*), with its little balls of fragrant flowerets, are also probably there. This last tree yields tannin from the bark, while the timber is utilised for making agricultural implements and carts — especially the naves of wheels. It is unpretending in appearance, lightly foliaged and thorny, and from its boughs very commonly may be seen hanging the marvellous nests of the clever little finches—the "bayas" or weaver birds (*Ploceus baya*).

There are probably not more that forty or fifty huts in the village—built of mud and thatched with grass, and nearly all consisting of one room scantily furnished; though sometimes there is an enclosed space in front or behind, in which domestic duties are performed and articles stored, and which affords more seclusion to the women of the household. If the occupant possesses a bullock or bullocks, they are tied up in this enclosure—being fed out of earthenware vessels embedded in raised mounds of earth. The vicinity of the dwelling is far from what the sanitarian approves of, for the general rubbish and sweepings are piled up here for fear of theft, before their removal for use as manure in the fields; but the interior of the hut is usually scrupulously clean, despite the fact that it is regularly daubed over with a mixture of mud and water and a little cow-dung. This last is carefully kept for use as fuel, and usually decorates the external walls of the dwelling in patches stuck on to dry in the sun. Landowners, it is true, will often allow the villagers to cut a little wood from their "dhak" jungles, as it is of little use for other purposes, so it is known as "the poor man's tree"; and curiously enough the author found in South Africa that a somewhat similar tree was known as "the Kaffir tree," for apparently very much the same reason. On one side of the village is the pond—an unsightly excavation, holding stagnant water and affording an excellent breeding-ground for mos-

quitoes—in which pigs wallow and from which the cattle drink. Its presence is inevitable, since it has been caused by the removal of the earth for the purpose of building and repairing the huts—landlords naturally objecting to their fields being so utilised. Then there are the village wells—some for high caste and some for low caste people,—where the women gather to draw water for drinking and other purposes, and to discuss in endless and noisy conversation the doings of their neighbours, &c.; while close by is the council-tree of the community, surrounded by a raised earth platform, where the village elders sit and smoke and talk far into the warm night.

The little village temple is nearly always overshadowed by the sacred peepul-tree (*Ficus religiosa*). There are usually gods in these trees—demons prefer the tamarind. The former has large leaves hanging loosely on a long stalk, and which move with the least breath of air; so that when all is apparently still they rustle mysteriously, and the movement is attributed to supernatural causes.

There are few shops in Muddunpore. Ruttun Lal squats in a shanty in the principal street, watching over a number of open sacks holding food-stuffs, spices, salt, and sweatmeats, amid a cloud of hornets and wasps, and with a great brass bell hanging in front of him. Lower down, in a similar shop, iron and brass cooking-pots, big-headed nails, matches, and (recently) awful

cigarettes, can be purchased. There are sure to be several potters—very useful servants to the community—fashioning out the mud vessels with the aid of the wheel of which the use goes back to remote antiquity. And on the outskirts of the settlement the wheelwright has his workshop, where he builds and repairs the heavy country carts used in the rural areas and drawn by oxen and buffaloes—ponderous conveyances constructed solely of wood, bamboo, and string, which by yielding survive the jolts and shocks incidental to passage over the rough country tracks. The public buildings consist of the village shrine, with a few trees round it, and the shed in which the children absorb some scraps of elementary education through the medium of an elementary schoolmaster. A little apart from the rest of the dwellings is a small group of wretched tenements, where dwell the very low caste "chamars"—the people who flay dead animals for the sake of their skins and live largely on the flesh. None of the streets are paved—the foot goes into some six inches of dust or mud. Buffaloes, goats, cows, and sacred bulls wander all over the site; monkeys swarm unmolested over the houses, roads, and trees; while scores of ownerless pariah-dogs, of all shapes and sizes, roam about the village and dispute with their own kind during the day, and with the jackals at night, for a precarious meal of offal and garbage.

This is a purely Hindoo village, and there is no

provision for Muhammadan occupation—those who come here for work living with their co-religionists in a hamlet a little way off; but the general description will apply to most little centres of population in Upper India, where the two sects live and work together as they have done for centuries.

Heera Singh's house is the only two-storied residence in Muddunpore, and it also possesses the crowning glory of a tiled roof. It is quadrangular in shape, with a courtyard in the centre, in which is the little altar, with the "tulsee" or holy basil to be placed on the tongue of the dying, and where are also tethered the bullocks; while in a corner of the same enclosure a weedy pony is tied by his head and heels to pegs in the ground under a grass thatch. This is the riding pony of the proprietor, and is of more value than its appearance indicates, on account of its steady amble; and it is surprising how fast and comfortably a rider not given to equestrian feats can get over the ground with an animal trained to this peculiar gait. The members of the family occupy the upper rooms, while the ground floor—much of it consisting of open verandahs—is thronged with poor relations and hangers-on, who loaf about the place, do odd jobs when required, and roll themselves up in their blankets to sleep when and where they like. The local status and reputation of an Indian gentleman is largely gauged by the extent of his toleration and support of the tag-rag

and bobtail which infests him; but, apart from this, the people of India are probably the most charitable in the world, and such a thing as State relief is not necessary except in famine times. Poorhouses exist in most towns, but are usually either empty or occupied by lepers, blind folk, waifs and strays.

Our Eastern farmer is an industrious and thrifty man, and he and his sons and employés are up at daylight, and having repeated some texts from the Puranas, made oblations to the sun, cleaned their teeth with sticks which they throw away, proceed, muffled up in blankets over their heads and bodies and with nothing round their legs, to the scene of their labours. They will wash themselves all over at a well in the fields, say their prayers, take their food, smoke the pipe of peace, sleep for an hour or two during the great heat of the day, and return home after their work at sunset. Then they again pray, take the principal meal, and after more smoking and perchance a chat under the council tree, lie down to rest, wrapped up in their blankets, on a rough bed constructed of wood and laced with stout string.

The little community is a distinct unit in itself, and, differing from conditions in other countries, most of the labourers work for themselves and not for employers—a fact to be borne in mind by oracles on wage-statistics. Lalloo the weaver and his caste-fellows provide most of the clothing and blankets; Buddhoo the sweeper and his class look

to the conservancy of the place; Paiga the watchman (a modest servant of the Government, clad in a blue jean coat and red puggri, registrar of births and deaths, and the usual ultimate source of evidence in police cases) rends the air at night with wild howls to keep off marauders; Seetul the water-carrier dispenses that commodity to consumers from his leather bag; and the barber shaves the community, retails gossip, and usually acts as the preliminary go-between among the parents when arrangements are made for alliances between the young folk of the village, before the family priest opens formal negotiations. The Brahman at the shrine attends to their religious wants; while the "patwari" keeps the revenue accounts and records the changes of tenure of land on curious, portable, and dirty maps.

Life proceeds very quietly in the village, with few excitements beyond the religious festivals, the visits to the neighbouring weekly market, the occasional inspection by a "sahib" connected with one or other of the State departments, or the outbreak of epidemic disease. Literature is at a discount, for few can read, and the tastes of those who can run mostly towards descriptions of the remarkable deeds and exploits of worthies in the distant past akin to the classic legend of the Great Panjandrum; or else to the counsels and wisdom of religious sages. Politics, art, science, and the doings of the outside world interest them but little, and the stray vernacular newspaper with its

editor's views as to proper government, which occasionally reaches the village, is perused and discussed in some bewilderment. Of crime there is very little — the circumstances of all are so well known that theft is almost certain of detection; female frailty is attended with more deterrent consequences than the divorce court; and outbreaks of violence between individuals are few and far between. The village council settles very many disputes, and ostracism from the caste is a terrible penalty. Heera Singh, as headman, has a good reputation for maintaining order in his village,—the little unpleasantness about the landmark between him and a neighbouring landowner, which happened about the time that the latter was found clubbed to death in his field, is well-nigh forgotten, though it might have gone hard with him had not Paiga the watchman and another villager fortunately chanced to observe the accused man stretched unconscious on a bed of sickness some twenty miles away, at the exact time of the murder.

Life being what it is, there is of course a dark side to the picture which has been drawn. There are times when cholera stalks through the little settlement, taking its victims from all indiscriminately: the strong breadwinners, the infants, and the old and feeble. Plague has of late years exacted its human toll; malaria, that curse of India, is an ever-threatening foe; and now and again famine holds the people in its fell

grip. But the peasant bows his head, imbued with a spirit of resignation which is a merciful gift to its possessor, and presently the clouds roll by and the sun shines once more.

This is a rough sketch, which must be somewhat modified according to the particular part of the country, of the life and environment of probably at least two-thirds of the population of India—the real India,—the voiceless simple people of which politicians know so little and are perhaps so tempted to ignore. Yet they are very real men and women, and with thoughts and feelings very deeply rooted, and worthy of consideration. They are not believers, it is true, in what Mr A. C. Benson calls "the gospel of push"; but then, as that writer goes on to observe, it has got to be proved that one was sent into the world to be "effective," and it is not even certain that a man has fulfilled the higher law of being if he has made a large fortune by business. Heera Singh and his friends have certain consolations,—they seldom suffer from "brain-storms" and the something or other "ego," suicides are rare, and the death registers have no column for "neurasthenia."



Village Scene.

II.

LALLOO'S REWARD.

Lalloo, cultivator, lived in a village in the north of that portion of the Himalayan regions known as Garhwal; owning his own little holding, living very largely on its produce, and earning the money required for clothing and other small wants of himself and his family by sometimes working for other people, carrying produce on his back over hill tracks to distant markets, and in other casual employment in which no particular intelligence was essential. He and his wife and his four small children were well enough contented with their lot, for it was much the same as that of their neighbours, and in their isolated existence they never conceived the notion of any other conditions. Their home was, from their point of view, a good one. It was two-storied, and the lower story was occupied by cattle and was exceedingly dirty; but the Hindu never seems to recognise the possible association of the idea of filth with the sacred cow. A ladder led to the upstairs rooms, two in number, small and absolutely unventilated;

for the cold in winter in the higher Himalayas is excessive, and the people are accustomed to huddle together in their dwellings for warmth, and to exist in an atmosphere which would suffocate a European, or even an Indian of the plains. The walls were of stone, and the roof of slabs of the same material, and over the latter straggled a mass of vegetation consisting of gourds, pumpkins, cucumbers, &c. There were only about a dozen houses in the village; all clustered together on a narrow ledge on the side of the mountain—so narrow that from some distance off the structures seemed almost to be attached like huge nests to the face of the cliff itself. Above and on either side of the little centre of population, were forests of various kinds of pines, firs, spruces, cypresses, poplars, rhododendrons, deodars, brushwood, &c.; while to one side of the ledge and about a hundred yards or so away, a deep, heavily-wooded ravine formed the channel through which the drainage of the area higher up tore its way—leaping in cascades or swirling round fallen boulders of rock in its precipitous course to the valley below.

The patches of cultivation belonging to the village were all situated a little lower down the hill on similar ledges to that upon which the dwellings stood—where the natural features of the face of the hill had been utilised and improved by extensive and ingenious terracing, so that, looking across the valley, the effect was that of a gigantic irregular staircase leading up the mountain-side

to the cluster of buildings at its summit. In these little fields the "mandwa" (*Eleusine corocana*) was principally grown, though various pulses were also cultivated; and on the margins of the crops the great tall heads of the purple amaranth shone against the lighter colours of the cereals. At the foot of the lofty range of hills was a broad valley, through the centre of which flowed a bright, shallow, rapid river, full of "mahseer" and other fish; while on either side of this, relieving the dark colours of the wooded slopes, stretched other patches of emerald-green cultivation, where the hill-rice was planted out, weeded, and eventually harvested.

Altogether it was a very charming and picturesque scene, with which the dwellings, if not inspected too closely, were in perfect harmony. The forests were full of gaily-plumaged birds, among which the pheasants (especially the Impeyan) were perhaps the most magnificent. The cry of the "chuckor" partridge greeted the dawn, while the harsh cries of the black species disturbed the silence of the valley. The "jerow" (the "sambhur" of the plains), the "kakur" or barking deer, and other Cervidæ belled, barked, and called in the recesses of the woods, while on the grassy slopes browsed the "ghural," and an occasional "thar," or mountain goat. Tigers were rare visitors, but leopards were numerous and bold, and the Himalayan black bear was a constant source of alarm to the people,—an animal probably

more detested and feared than any other wild beast in these tracts.

The tastes of Lalloo and his friends, however, were not æsthetic, nor did they take much interest in either scenery or natural history. To them, apart from their edible qualities, a bird was merely a bird, or an animal an animal; just as a tree was a tree, or a stone a stone. Not a soul in the village could read or write; few had ever been out of the hills; and the only subjects of conversation were the prices of grain, the prospects of the harvest, the existence of epidemic disease, or the backslidings of their male and female acquaintances. They cultivated their fields by the aid of their small oxen with the same sort of plough that their ancestors had employed a thousand years ago; they sowed the grain and irrigated the plots where necessary; cut down the crops with a rough sort of sickle; beat out and winnowed the grain after the manner of the Israelites; buried this under the floors of their dwellings or stored it in great earthen pots; and packed the straw up among the branches of trees, where it kept fairly dry and where the cattle could not get at it. The coarse linen coats they wore in summer — the blanket ones, folded across the chest and kept in position by a long skewer-like pin, for winter use, and also the blankets themselves — were nearly all made in the village. Salt, tobacco, a little country spirit, buttons, thread, and a few odds and ends, were almost all they obtained from outside. They

would have called themselves Hindus, but, as a matter of fact, were almost as much Buddhists; although their belief in godlets, shades, and spirits was so extensive and deep-rooted that their religion, if it could be so called, was little removed from Animism. Every hill-top, every stream, every spot where a path crossed a watershed, had its godlet to whom the wayfarer paid homage by hanging shreds of clothing on the branches of trees, or in other primitive ways. They made offerings also at little shrines, usually untenanted and in out-of-the-way places, and worshipped the Great Gods who dwelt on the loftier peaks; but they had no congregational ritual, and the general moral conduct of the community was controlled and regulated by "punchayets" or meetings of the elders of the people, who dealt with such matters on general communistic principles. The Government, it is true, had its own officials looking after a group of villages, and every such centre had its responsible headman; but unless anything serious occurred, which was rarely the case, the simple inhabitants were left very much to their own devices.

That besetting sin of the Oriental, the taste for litigation, which, as elsewhere, was most usually connected with pecuniary affairs, was not entirely absent in Banskhet, where Lalloo resided — and this presently proved the source of the cultivator's undoing. His case was rather complicated. A succession of bad agricultural years had neces-

sitated his mortgaging his little property to a shopkeeper in a small village a few miles away. A later year proving very prosperous, he had foolishly, instead of paying off the mortgage, lent the profits to a distant relative at a very high rate of interest and for a very short period. This, however, had proved a disastrous speculation, for he could neither get his capital back nor even the interest on it—and no record of the transaction had been kept. Presently the shopkeeper, tired of waiting for his money, threatened to foreclose. Lalloo, alarmed at this action, talked the matter over with his wife's cousin, Tota, and, as a result, one morning the pair wended their way across the mountains to a village where resided one of those pests of Indian society, a low-class unqualified lawyer. To him they confided their trouble—unfortunately with the mendacious addition that, although no written record of the loan existed, it had been granted in the presence of two witnesses (of whom Tota was one) fully aware of the terms upon which it had been made. The advice given was that if the two witnesses could be produced, and were reliable (the lawyer laid considerable stress upon the latter requirement, and with a significant expression), the debtor should be sued; and this was accordingly done.

Lalloo and Tota, returning to their village, had a long private talk with Pèru, a neighbour, and in due time and in response to a summons, the three worthies made a long journey to the court presided

over by an Indian judge before whom the case was to be tried. The trial duly came on, and at first all went well. Lalloo's description of how, touched with the distress of his relative, he had impulsively lent him the money without any written agreement, left little to be desired ; and Tota and Pèru bore out his statements manfully — making the useful additions in their evidence that they had at the time protested against his generous confidence in his relation, as shown by his thus advancing the money without any bond being executed. They were all somewhat surprised and relieved to find that the defendant made no attempt to cross-examine them or to controvert what they said. But when called upon for his defence, he candidly acknowledged the receipt of the loan, producing, however, four witnesses, totally unknown to Lalloo, who swore to not only having seen it repaid to the claimant a fortnight after the incident deposed to, but had witnessed with indignation the latter's attempts to extort a whole year's interest in addition to what he was entitled to!

What was to be done? There were no documentary proofs on either side—it was a pure question of reliability of personal evidence. Lalloo looked at his friends—his friends looked at him; this was an entirely unforeseen line of defence, and they stood with open mouths, staring in front of them completely nonplussed. In reply to the judge, Lalloo was understood to say that he had been suffering from fever about that time and was

probably "bihosh" (senseless). This reply, which appeared to be uttered more as a formula than as having any direct bearing on the matter, was obviously unsatisfactory. A similar misfortune appeared to have occurred to Pèru and the wife's cousin at the same time. All added, rather inconsequently, that the judge was the Cherisher of the Poor, and that they were all poor men. The case was dismissed — the judge abstaining from any comments, probably because he considered the evidence on both sides equally negligible, and was, moreover, quite familiar with the mixture of simplicity and cunning which is the usual accompaniment of such proceedings in India.

It was a gloomy party that set out to return to Banskhet. Lalloo was silent and dejected; Tota inveighed against the wickedness of hired and perjured witnesses; while Pèru mournfully reminded his friends how he had protested against continuing the journey after witnessing an incident in the life of two crows which was well known to bring disaster on the observer. The shopkeeper, who was not long in ascertaining the result of the trial, promptly foreclosed, and the unhappy Lalloo (who had no inclination for any further appearances in court), making no defence, was duly evicted from his property.

When a man in the West is hopelessly "downed" he is very liable to blow his brains out or take to drink. In the East he is very likely to go on a pilgrimage—which is better. Lalloo, homeless,

handed over the wreck of his fortune to his wife and children, and sent them to the care of his father-in-law; and keeping a small sum for himself wrapped up in his waist-cloth, started off to tramp to holy Kedarnath and Badrinarain—the sacred shrines to the north amid the eternal snows. Kedarnath is sacred to Shiva, as Badrinarain is to Vishnu. Lalloo was a follower of the former, but his time was his own, and as is more usually the case with these pilgrims, he determined to visit both localities and thereby enlist the sympathies of both deities. It was quite easy to join the long procession of devotees winding up from sacred Hardwar along the banks of the deep-rolling Alekananda river, for no one took any concern with the appearance and habits of his fellow-travellers. Many had come from remote parts of India,—they were of all castes; the only common characteristic being that they were all Hindus. There were no children—the journey was too long, arduous, and perilous for that; but there were many old folk, men and women—the latter sometimes carried in a sort of pannier on the backs of sturdy hillmen engaged for the pilgrimage. As was the case (if we may trust Chaucer) with regard to similar expeditions in our own country, although the majority of the worshippers were thoroughly sincere, there was a considerable leaven of rogues and vagabonds—the latter not infrequently disguising their real character under the garb of the religious mendicant known as the "sadhu." Very

often—more often than not—the travellers were in little bands from the same locality, quite as much from feelings of protection as desire for companionship, for the journey was by no means unattended with perils from man and beast.

Lalloo wandered along with the great collection of thousands of men and women, day after day. At the first gleam of light he arose, recited his prayers, and proceeded on his way—bathed, prayed, ate a little parched grain, smoked, slept a little at noon—and finished his march in time to cook his food, smoke again, and then lie down in slumber among the numerous fires all over the temporary encampment. There was very little gaiety on the route—most pilgrims plodding along in silence and only exchanging the religious greeting, "Ram, Ram," with a fellow-traveller when it was necessary to say something. Yet, strange to say, he was not depressed or sad. The magnificent and solemn grandeur of the views and landscapes left him comparatively cold, but the change of scene each day, the abstemious life and the steady exercise, all kept him interested and healthy, for, as Carlyle says, "with stupidity and a sound digestion, man may front much." Moreover, at the back of his mind he felt that if, as seemed probable from recent events, he had in some way offended the Great Gods, much might be hoped from his present action. Certainly all his sins would be washed away, and it might very well be, indeed, that the Bright Ones might

after all extend forgiveness and smile on him again.

Presently he left the track by the great roaring river, and followed one over some mighty mountains until he reached the shrine of Kedarnath. Here he worshipped and made his offering, and retracing his steps until he again reached the river, wended his way to where the blessed Krishna stood for a hundred years on one foot—the holy temple of Badrinarain. He paid his devotions at the lonely shrine with the vast solemn snow-clad mountains towering all round it; bathed in the hot geyser-fed pool; made his modest offering to the High Priest; received a little copper plate stamped with the image of Vishnu; purchased a thorny stick which all pilgrims provide themselves with; and experienced a feeling of great mental relief. But, physically, his state was not so satisfactory. Perhaps from bathing in the icy water of the glacier-fed river, perhaps from the coarse food he had been consuming, he had found himself for the last few days suffering from dysentery. No pilgrim, if he can help it, takes medicine *en route* before he has accomplished the object of his pilgrimage; but now he felt really seriously ill. He crawled along on the return journey until, after two days of agonizing travel, he reached one of the little hospitals which are maintained by the Government (aided by contributions from the custodians of the shrines) along the pilgrim route at distances of some

twenty or thirty miles apart. Here he was admitted and treated by the Indian doctor in charge. He lay for several days almost unconscious, but his constitution was good, and presently he began to mend and to take an interest in his surroundings. On one side he had the wall of the building, but upon a string cot on the other lay a man wrapped in one of the hospital blankets, whose groans kept him constantly awake. His, the "doctor-baboo" said, was a very bad case, and one of dysentery, like his own. He was, they told him, a "sadhu," but evidently a resident of the plains and not of the hills; though, like all his fraternity, he declined to give any account of himself, or say from whence he came.

One night, Lalloo, lying awake, heard something fall on the floor. It was not a large object, but what attracted his attention was that he heard it clink. Turning over cautiously in his cot, he looked down and saw a small canvas bag which had evidently fallen out of the "sadhu's" bed. The latter lay quite still in his blanket, and Lalloo was fired with curiosity to ascertain what had caused the metallic sound. He cautiously put down his hand and found he could just touch the pouch. There were, he could feel, some small square objects, and some of irregular pointed shape, the nature of which he could not make out, inside. A slight movement of the owner made him abandon his touch, withdraw his hand under his blanket, and feign sleep. Presently his neighbour moved

restlessly in his bed, and after a few moments started up and glanced rapidly at him. Apparently reassured, however, he quickly recovered his bag and rolled over as if in slumber. Nothing more transpired, and next morning the "sadhu" declared himself, and indeed appeared, somewhat better. He spoke to Lalloo, mostly about his having been starved into his present condition by want of charitable assistance, and made a few other casual remarks. He was a tall, emaciated, clean-shaven man about fifty years of age, with a cunning glittering eye, and wearing the saffron-coloured robes so often affected by the religious ascetic. Two days later, in the morning, his cot was found empty,—he must have stolen away in the darkness.

Lalloo only spent another night in the hospital, and then, after thanking the doctor and purchasing some food for the journey, proceeded, almost himself again, on his travels. He had been speculating a good deal about the little bag, for he had come to the conclusion from the weight and shape of the square objects, that they were nothing else than gold mohurs, and, if so, worth about sixteen rupees each. What did a "sadhu" who was supposed to possess no money and to live entirely on charity want with such comparative wealth? And what of the other objects? Lalloo had conjectured that they were articles of jewellery which, as he well knew, were often carried by women up to the shrines to be there offered to the gods. He was

determined to follow the man, though he had no intention of robbing him or indeed of exciting his anger; for if, after all, he really was a holy man, the consequences might be extremely uncomfortable. He was now quite fit to travel, and as the suspected person would probably rejoin the column of returning pilgrims for purposes of safety, their ways would lie in the same direction. But there was one thing he was uncertain about, and that was whether his neighbour in hospital might not really have seen him examining his property? The haste he had exhibited in leaving was curious, for he had been then still very ill. If he had any suspicions they would be confirmed by his (Lalloo's) immediate reappearance among the pilgrims with whom he might be travelling, and upon the whole he thought, therefore, it would be wiser to strike across the mountains by a hill track he knew of, with a view to dropping down again into the valley and rejoining the stream of travellers a couple of marches or so lower down the route. It was a lonely wild path, as he knew, but he carried with him, like many hillmen, a knife used by the Goorkhas, of a peculiar shape, but in the hands of one accustomed to its use, of wonderful efficiency. He could cut off the head of a goat, or lop off a stout branch, with one stroke from it, and with this in his possession, he had little fear of wild beasts or man. There were still some hours of light left when he started, and he hoped before darkness fell to reach one of the little "dharamsalas" or

rest-houses which are often built by charitable people in the hills for the use of wayfarers, and which generally consist of just four stone walls roofed in with slabs of the same material, enclosing an area of some ten feet square, and to which access is obtained by means of a narrow open doorway. Here he would spend the night, and continue his progress in the morning.

Like all dwellers in the forests, Lalloo, though not particularly intelligent in ordinary matters, was a very keen observer of small incidents and circumstances connected with the life, animal and vegetable, about him, and was, moreover, no mean woodsman. He was interested then in speculating as to what was the cause of the noisy chattering of some great grey monkeys (or "lungoors") a little to the side of the track, when he had proceeded a mile or so on his journey. Cautiously stalking them, he saw to his surprise that they were busily engaged in tearing to pieces a garment which he at once recognised by its colour to be that of a religious mendicant. On his near approach the animals, alarmed, fled up the trees with angry expostulations, and he proceeded to examine the fragments of coarse cloth they had scattered about. His eye very soon lighted upon a small bag very like the one he had seen in the hospital —but it was too light, he discovered, to be that. He untied the string round its mouth and shook out a little of the contents, and gave vent to an expression of surprise, for he at once recognised

them to consist of portions of the "datura" plant,—a product of the jungles often used by professional robbers in India to stupefy unsuspecting travellers on the road! A careful search revealed nothing more which would help to clear up the mystery. He walked on for some time pondering, and then, feeling somewhat tired, sat down, cooked some food, and presently fell asleep.

It was probably the result of his recent illness, but he slumbered long and deeply, and when he awoke the sun had set; and in the East there is very little twilight. He started at once, but in another hour or so was in complete darkness, and what was worse, had lost the track. It was a still, very quiet, night, but now and again a little eddy of wind shook the pines and other coniferous trees in the neighbourhood, producing a low soughing sound, and then died away again. Once or twice an owl, or some other nocturnal bird, called close by, and the wayfarer's trained ear occasionally detected the sound of some large body moving in the jungle in the vicinity. But these incidents, alarming enough to one strange to them, disturbed Lalloo very little,—far more important to him was the appearance of the little lights occasionally seen here and there on the hillsides a long distance off, and which might be due to the presence of little hamlets, but which possibly had another significance. He was not much afraid of material things, but had a very real dread of "bhoots," or malevolent spirits which might be wandering

abroad, and so, guided to some extent by the stars, he made strenuous efforts to regain the track and find the little shanty. But it was some years since he had been in this part of the country —he was completely lost—and so it was with considerable relief that about two or three o'clock in the morning he suddenly saw the rest-house looming up just in front of him. He struck a match abstracted from his waist-cloth, bent down to enter the low doorway—and the next moment was sprawling on the ground with a leopard's teeth fixed in his shoulder and the claws tearing the skin from his back! The attack was so sudden and unexpected that he had hardly heard the roar, or seen the flash of the yellow body, as the creature sprang upon him. Over and over rolled the man and the beast in the darkness. It was a powerful animal, and its snarls and hot breath mingled with his own cries and laboured efforts at respiration. He tried to free himself from the savage clutch, but in vain. He was streaming with blood; the cruel teeth seemed to be gnawing down to the very bone, while the long sharp claws tore deep furrows in his flesh. Once he got his hand on her (for it was a female) throat, but she rapidly changed her grip and seized him by the hand—luckily the left one. Again and again they rolled over together, blended in one struggling mass. A mist swam before his eyes and he felt his strength failing. How long the struggle lasted Lalloo never knew, but weak

as he still was, he was a resolute, courageous man where things he understood were concerned, and fought bravely for his life. Suddenly the leopard sprang back, and while she crouched for a fresh spring, he, with a last effort, snatched out his "kukri" from its sheath with his sound right hand, and when the beast again launched herself upon him, drove the weapon up to the hilt in her throat. A gush of hot blood followed—he felt the jaws relax—heard faintly a sort of gurgling sigh—and fell back senseless.

When he regained consciousness the day had broken. Birds were singing, he heard a distant "kakur" barking, the sun shone bright in the sky, and he noted with a forester's eye two large vultures circling round and surveying with hungry interest the scene below them. He found himself in front of the little rest-house, very faint and sore, and with the leopard lying beside him stark and cold, and the knife still sticking in the spot where he had plunged it. He was smothered in blood—some his own and some that of his foe—but he was relieved to find that his wounds had stopped bleeding, and that his bones were intact. The beast had probably made for his throat, but had missed her aim and caught him by the shoulder—fortunately not injuring the great vessels of the neck—and had also terribly lacerated his hand and back. But his legs were sound, and with great pain and difficulty, for his left arm was quite useless, he staggered to his feet. A cheerful

swirling sound told him of the existence of a mountain stream close by, and he managed to reach the bank of this, where he deeply drank, washed his wounds as far as he could with his uninjured hand, and, returning slowly to the shanty, succeeded after some time with the assistance of his toes, which an Indian uses almost like fingers, in scraping together some fallen leaves and wood, lighting a match, and cooking a little food over his fire. He made no further attempt to enter the building, but wrapping himself in his blanket, dozed at intervals during the day. In the evening he replenished his fire, chewed some parched grain, and recovering his string bag with his flint and steel and tobacco lying close by, smoked for a little while and then fell asleep.

Next morning, though still very stiff and sore, he felt better, and after withdrawing the knife from the leopard's throat and holding it in his uninjured hand, he re-entered the shanty. The sun shining through the doorway only illuminated a portion of the interior, but he could discern, huddled up in one of the dark corners on the ground, something which looked as if it were covered with a blanket. Possessing himself of three or four large stones, he heaved them at the object, and stood on his defence. But there was no result—whatever it was, it was evidently lifeless. Presently, summoning up his courage, he cautiously approached it, and, drawing back its covering, discovered to his horror the dead body

of a man. His hand felt sticky, and there was a curious sickly smell. He dragged, after a few hesitating moments, the corpse to where the light streamed through the entrance, and examined it more closely. The blanket was in tatters, one arm was nearly torn off and eaten, and the bowels were protruding through a great hole in the abdomen. But the face was uninjured save for a few scratches, and Lalloo staggered back as he gazed at it. For it was that of his erst-while companion in the hospital—the mysterious "sadhu"!

Faint and sick, he returned to the open air and sat down; remaining in that position for something like an hour. He was doing what was very unusual for him — thinking deeply. The body, he had noticed when he removed the blanket, was clad in a hillman's torn woollen coat, and the canvas cap with the long ear-flaps affected by the religious ascetic, had been replaced by the little black tight-fitting skull-cap worn by the dweller on the mountains. Lalloo slowly pieced it all together in his somewhat sluggish mind, and what he conjectured was this. The soi-disant "sadhu" was really a professional poisoner and robber who, having secured his ill-gotten gains, was returning to the plains. Of this he felt pretty sure. But what about the change of garb? The explanation of this which he conceived was that the rogue had carried a hillman's garments in his little pack of bedding, intending to don

them on his return journey as a disguise. He had hidden them in the jungle before entering the hospital, but could not bring himself at the same time to secrete his treasure. After leaving the institution he had effected the contemplated change, abandoning the "sadhu's" raiment where he had little fear of its being found—or, if it were, would attract no particular notice. He had at the same time discarded his bag of poison,—an incriminating article if found upon him, and for which, moreover, he had no further use. His reaching the "dharamsala" was probably accidental. Had he been killed by the leopard? Lalloo thought probably not. Judging from the appearance of the body, the absence of signs of a struggle, the expression on his face, and certain other indications, it seemed more likely that he had only reached the shelter, in his exhausted condition, to succumb to his disease and die. Here the leopard, attracted by the scent, had found him, and had been interrupted while at her gruesome meal.

The theory was in all probability correct. Leopards as a rule are cowardly animals, and rarely attack a man except in self-defence. But this one had been disturbed by the silent approach of the new arrival, her retreat had been completely cut off, she was brought to bay, and had quite naturally made her onslaught in order to escape. Almost any large animal would have done the same.

You may be quite sure that, after having arrived at these conclusions as the result of these unwonted mental exercises, Lalloo did not fail to return to the pitiful remains to search for the little bag he so well remembered, and, sure enough, there it was, carefully concealed in the waist-cloth. Taking it into the open, he greedily opened it, and what he saw went a long way towards his recovery. Gold mohurs, bangles, earrings, nose-rings, gems strung on wires,—it was a spectacle a miser would have gloated over, and seemed a veritable treasure to one in the position of a hill villager. His eyes sparkled with delight. He was, indeed, so well satisfied with affairs that he by no means welcomed the possibility of having to give an explanation of what had occurred to any one who might chance to arrive on the spot —so, carefully concealing his find upon his person, he took some food, and after, with complete indifference, rolling the bodies of the "sadhu" and the leopard down the slope of a neighbouring ravine, started off, and managed to put some miles between him and the scene of his adventures before the sun went down. Travelling slowly, in a few days he reached a small village, where he begged assistance as a starving pilgrim who was returning from Badrinarain, and had been mauled *en route* by a bear. He had the little copper plate with the image of Vishnu and his thorny stick as corroborating evidence of his statements, and food and simple medicaments were freely

bestowed by the sympathetic residents. From thence, after a few days' rest, he wended his way by a circuitous route to the plains, and presently reached a big city. His object was the disposal of his newly-acquired property; and this involved proceedings of a delicate nature. But he broke up the trinkets and melted the gold mohurs, and by disposing of his various nuggets and jewels in small quantities and at different places (not very difficult to obtain knowledge of), he presently found himself in possession of a very considerable hoard, and of a nature which was beyond official criticism and the impertinent inquiries of the police. With this he returned to his beloved mountains, purchasing land, and dwelling in a locality very far removed from Banskhet.

There is not much more to relate. As soon as he was fairly settled in his new home, his wife and children joined him. How he enlightened the former as to the source of his affluence is not positively known, but it is believed that he attributed it to the benevolence of the Great Gods, who had led him to find a bag of gold dropped by some one on the road. This somewhat thin explanation would seem to have satisfied her, although perhaps a more punctilious person might have considered that, under the circumstances, the more correct course would have been to have handed over the treasure to the authorities with a view to finding the rightful owner. But people look at things in different

ways. The village woman's standard of morality on such matters was probably not very high, and as to Lalloo himself, he was perfectly certain that his good fortune was a reward for an act of merit —though as to the method of bestowal, he was, for obvious reasons, by no means inclined to go into any particulars. But there was no more confirmed believer than the erstwhile cultivator in the efficacy of a pilgrimage to Shiva's (or was it Vishnu's ?) shrine—no one more convinced of the benevolence of the Bright Ones, and the unfathomable wisdom displayed by them in accomplishing their designs. He lived a long, much respected, and fairly honest, life, and when he died, a small copper plate with Vishnu's effigy was found sewn in the breast of the venerable garment which represented his shirt. No one knew its history. Perhaps it had been regarded as a talisman. Buddhoo, sweeper, stole it, and wore it concealed on his person for some time ; but it did him no good, and he eventually sold it for a rupee to a fat Benares shopkeeper who had started on his way to the shrines, but who had had quite enough of the inconveniences of the journey, and welcomed the chance of returning to his home without further trouble, provided with this convincing if misleading proof of his self-denial and piety.



A Mutiny Veteran at the Residency.

III.

THE GARDEN OF INDIA.

THE writer, looking back on a long career in India, finds his memories largely centering round his first responsible appointment in a civil station in that country—a little unimportant settlement in Oudh. The offer of this post, a source of surprise and elation, arrived when he was with a regiment in Northern India, and the name of the place was absolutely unknown either to him or to his brother officers. Their advice was to write to the magistrate, asking for particulars regarding the duties, European population, accommodation available, sport, &c., before definitely accepting the billet. In two or three days' time a letter duly arrived, and was read out at mess to our little circle. So far as memory serves, it ran something like this :—

"DEAR SIR,—We are very pleased to hear of your probable arrival among us, and shall give you a hearty welcome. —— is a small station, only seventeen miles from the railway, and when

a proper road is constructed, will be very accessible. At present we use bullock-carts, and if you will let me know when to expect you, I will arrange to have one sent to the nearest railway station at ——. There are only three Europeans here, so it will be a great thing to have you for a fourth hand at whist, for in the absence of racquet and tennis courts, library or swimming-bath, we are sometimes a little dull. I cannot say this of myself, as I am at present engaged in writing a little work on the early history of the Semitic race, and fortunately neither of my *confrères* are fond of athletics. There is no sport in the district, but the butterflies at the right time of the year are particularly numerous, and I believe some species, such as the *Vanessa alba*, are found nowhere else. I cannot say much of the life you would lead, as it depends so much upon the temperament; but there is not much work, and existence, apart from climatic conditions, is very restful. As regards accommodation, I shall be very pleased if you will accept my hospitality for a time, for, as you are doubtless aware, your predecessor, poor Captain ——, died very suddenly from cholera, and it will be necessary for the house to be thoroughly disinfected before you go into it. I am afraid a little delay will occur about this, as at present, on account of the very heavy rains, there is a foot of water on the floors, and part of the roof has fallen in. Unfortunately this is the only house available, but I am endeavouring to

induce the native owner to do something to it. The living here is cheap, as, on account of the difficulty in getting supplies, wine, spirits, tobacco, &c., we principally use the native articles obtainable in the local bazaar. Again expressing our pleasure at the prospect of soon meeting you.—I remain, dear sir, yours very faithfully,

——.

"*P.S.*—When you come, perhaps you will kindly ask at the railway station for the bread and bring it out with you, as it is not made here, but comes out by rail as opportunity serves."

If he had not been occupied in reading out this cheerful epistle, the author would probably have noticed the joy exhibited by the audience in watching his dejected and disgusted expression during the delivery of its contents, but at its conclusion a chorus of congratulations was poured upon him, and when he excitedly expressed his determination to decline the abominable appointment by the next post, there were many expostulations. But it could not be kept up very long, and presently there was a roar of laughter, and it was explained that the letter had been concocted by the adjutant, assisted by the rest, and that the whole thing was a practical joke. The real reply came next day.

As a matter of fact, however, part of the fictitious letter was true, for there *was* a foot

of water on the floor of the house when the writer arrived, and indeed the portion of the railway line by which he reached his destination was all washed away a few hours after he had traversed it. He *did* thankfully accept the hospitality of the magistrate for a time, though the latter was a good sportsman, totally uninterested in butterflies, and knowing and caring nothing about the Semitic race. There was a good deal of pleasure presently in actually owning your own house and having your own property about you. It was really a pretty little place, with a good garden, ample stabling, and with plenty of fine trees round the building; including the poinsettia with its brilliant red bracts, the tamarind, the mango, the "flame of the forest," and the beautiful poinciana or gold-mohur tree—the modern representative of a now unhappily extinct species. The garden swarmed with birds, and the writer woke in the early mornings to the sound of the cheery warbling of the red-cheeked bulbuls and the deeper notes of the golden oriole, the barbet, the koel, and many other feathered songsters. The house soon became more or less a menagerie with the various pets and frequenters—a tame black-buck, a sarus crane, a brood of young otters, a colony of little screech-owls in the roof, a pack of dogs, and an occasional cobra which chivied the rats in the empty room where the horses' grain was stored. It was situated on the edge of a little settlement, and on three sides the eye rested on nothing but

cultivated fields and large grassy plains stretching away to where, on the horizon, lay the small lakes or "jheels" to which in the cold weather the wild fowl resorted in countless numbers.

Oudh, "the garden of India," has always had a great fascination for the writer, as it has for most people; and in later years he has wandered over the whole of its fertile and interesting expanse. Situated in the north of our great dependency, it is bordered on the west by the Rohilcund Division (formerly a portion of it); on the east and south by districts of the North-west Provinces; and to the north again by the strip of Tarai at the foot of the Himalayas belonging to Nepal. Its population at the last census was 12,561,734, of which the great majority (over 11 millions) were agriculturists or living in the rural areas, and although for so many years the ruling dynasty was Muhammadan, its general population is principally Hindu (85 per cent). Its area is 23,966 square miles, and in so vast an expanse many varying tracts of country are of course met with, but it principally consists of fertile cultivated fields growing the various cereals, pulses, oils, &c. — dotted here and there with large "usar" plains incapable of producing more than scanty and coarse grass on account of the presence of the "reh" or deposit of certain deleterious salts brought to the surface of the ground by the evaporation of the moisture of the soil. Upon these semi-arid plains roam herds of ante-

lopes—the stalking of the males of which (black-buck) delights the sportsman. Small forests of the "dhak" (*Butea frondosa*), lightly-foliated low trees, but bearing wonderfully beautiful papilionaceous flowers with orange-coloured petals and velvety green calyces, are frequent in the less productive tracts. The whole country indeed is well wooded, mostly with the useful dark-green mango. To plant a grove of trees is an act of merit, and as the proceeding happens usually to be also profitable, the country is well provided with their welcome shelter and shade, beneath which all are permitted to halt and rest. Away to the north the scenery is often very fine; with large forests of stately trees of many descriptions, and with grassy glades stretching between them—frequently reminding one of an extensive English park. The Province is watered by large and important rivers, from the Ganges in the south to the Raptee in the north; the latter of which the last remnants of the shattered rebel forces under the miscreant Nana Sahib crossed in their flight into the trackless jungles at the foot of the Nepal hills. Upon its south bank, covered with an almost impenetrable tangle of thorny vegetation, lie the mounds and hillocks which denote the site of the ancient city of Sahet-mahet, associated with the life of Gautama Buddha, "the awakened," some 2400 years ago. Where he preached is now the home of the wild boar, the wolf and the jackal; and here the author un-

earthed the skeleton of a boa-constrictor some twenty feet in length. Excavations have been carried on about the site under the supervision of officers with special knowledge, and the Lucknow Museum contains many archæological treasures there discovered.

The fauna and flora are similar to those in the United Provinces generally, and in the north the handsome "gond" or swamp-deer, and—just over the border—an occasional rhinoceros, are met with. Here it was that the King-Emperor recently made his excellent bags.

There are but two towns of importance—Lucknow, and Fyzabad with its neighbour Ajoodhya. Descriptions of the former are familiar to all readers. No traveller in India omits to visit the Residency—that scene of matchless heroism and endurance. The present writer first did so in company with a friend who had been one of its defenders, and who had had two fingers blown off his hand when once, in counter-mining against the besiegers, the thin wall of earth between the two tunnels had suddenly collapsed, and from the hail of bullets which poured through the opening, he had received several wounds. It was thrilling to listen to his stories of incidents at the site of each post or battery, and when one fully recognises how ill-constructed and imperfect were the actual defences and entrenchments, it is hard to grasp how the place could ever have been held. One can picture the return of the exhausted force

from the disastrous engagement at Chinhut, and see again the hasty completion of arrangements made in the stern determination to stand together here and hold the position to the last. In one of the buildings at the Residency is a large model of the place as it existed at the time of the siege, and from this it can be clearly perceived how exposed the position really was, and how the close proximity of many buildings to the entrenchments added so seriously to the dangers by affording cover to the enemy. All the besieged took their part in the defence, and another friend of the author wears the Mutiny medal for having carried powder to the batteries when a mere child. Apart from the unexampled bravery of the garrison, two facts stand out prominently in explanation of the successful resistance,—the wisdom which led to the blowing up of the Machi Bhawan fort and the concentration upon the Residency — and the total absence during the whole investment of any leader, except Man Singh, of marked determination and influence among the besiegers. Most descriptions of the Relief of Lucknow terminate with the victorious entry of Sir Colin Campbell, but the force left behind at the Alum Bagh close by, after his return to Cawnpore, had plenty of work to do, as is so well described by Surgeon-General Sir A. D. Home, V.C., in his interesting 'Service Memories,' edited by Colonel C. H. Melville, R.A.M.C. This author mentions a pathetic fact which the present writer has also heard. "Ayahs"

(native nurses) had in several cases fled with their little European charges to save them from the mutineers, and when their protectresses had died or been killed, it was sometimes impossible to identify the poor little waifs when rescued and found later on, as they could only remember their pet names.

Some one has written or said that in life it is the small things that worry, and almost all the men the writer has met with who were in the defence, always came back in their recitals to the mention of the awful curse of mosquitoes and flies. That this should have been so bad is easily explained by the insanitary condition of the entrenchments, but even to-day the impression is conveyed that Lucknow in the hot weather is the very haunt and sanctuary of all flies. The people only kill them in self-defence, and in the toleration of the nuisance might be Jains—a religious community which never takes life in any form, and which is so careful in this respect that its members even filter their water through a cloth before drinking, for fear of swallowing insects. With the progress of education, a delicate question (among others) will presently arise in this connection as to the exact position of microbes. Efforts have been made by the authorities to keep down the pest by offering rewards for the destruction of the insects, but the feeling of the residents was opposed to such measures, and the singing of a contemptuous jingle concerning the antecedents of

those engaged in the pursuit, soon killed the enterprise. Why Lucknow should suffer so severely from this affliction is not very clear, for its sanitary condition is not inferior to that of many other centres of population. An old Indian friend of the writer, while stating that it was even worse in former days, held the view that originally it was due to the fact that in the Nawabi times every noble kept several elephants, and that when one of these animals died its enormous bulk prevented its removal, and it was consequently more or less imperfectly buried where it fell. He stated that within his own knowledge hundreds of carcases had been so dealt with, and indeed it is a fact that there is hardly a well in the city which holds water fit for drinking, on account of the organic matter and nitrogenous salts which it contains. The introduction of a filtered water supply has been very beneficial to the health of the residents.

Lucknow is prettily situated on the winding river Goomtee, possesses many fine buildings, and is interesting, but nevertheless somewhat depressing. There are of course some beautiful structures, such as the Burra Imambara, with its hundreds of little cupolas which always reminded the author of the great lanterns we see depicted on the ships of the Spanish Armada, and with its vast interior covered in with what is said to be the largest flat roof in the world unsupported by columns. The Roomi Darwasa also is very fine

from an architectural point of view, but the general effect of the buildings is more or less meretricious from the wholesale use of stucco and colour wash — as is often the case with "goparums" in Southern India. They have to be frequently repaired and renovated, but after this has been recently done, the impression created by the numerous snow-white domes and minarets against the cloudless blue of an Indian sky in the cold weather is extremely pleasing. From the summits of these minarets at the first gleam of dawn the muezzin calls to prayer the followers of the Prophet—"Allahu Akbar! God is most Great! Come to prayer! Prayer is better than sleep! There is no God save Allah! He giveth life and dieth not! My sins are great; greater is Allah's mercy! I extol his perfections! Allahu Akbar — God is most Great!" Many of the buildings exhibit beautiful screens of that delicate lace-work in stone so characteristic of Moslem architecture, which, while permitting the passage of light and air, so efficiently protect the secluded inmates of a dwelling from curious eyes, and at the same time allow observation of the world from inside.

Its inhabitants, mostly Muhammadans, bear the stamp of men imbued with ideas incapable of realisation, and who fail to rise to the necessity of a change of thought and action. The fifth largest city in India, its commercial and intellectual importance is altogether out of proportion

to its size, and it forms a striking contrast to its bustling and wealthy neighbour Cawnpore, not fifty miles away. Lucknow, indeed, in old days existed but for the Court, and every nobleman, and all the "Taluqdars," or large landowners (the Barons of Oudh), had their town houses here;—and this from necessity, in order to protect themselves from the machinations and intrigues of their rivals, which were sure to be carried on in their absence. All looked to the Throne for wealth and distinction, and these were given as a rule with great capriciousness and with little regard for real merit. The Nawab was surrounded by a host of more or less turbulent feudatories and a crowd of sycophantic followers and hangers-on, and yielded alternately to menace and cajolery. At the annexation, pensions were assigned or continued in great numbers. Most of them, sufficient for the wants of the beneficiaries at the time, are now, divided up as they are into many small shares, quite inadequate for the support of their descendants, and unfortunately their recipients as a rule make but little effort to add to their scanty incomes. Some of the pensions held formerly were for most absurd services. One is mentioned which was assigned for providing a favourite dog of the Nawab with rose-water to drink; as this was declared to be the only beverage which would keep the dog from barking at night and disturbing the sleep of his master. The dog had died

a hundred years ago, but the pension, either from carelessness or rascality, had been always regularly paid to the descendants of the keeper of the royal kennel. It chanced that the author, long ago, had rendered some small service to a decayed though military-looking old pensioner of mixed blood, who had held the position of custodian and trainer of the last Nawab's fighting cocks. He was distinctly a *laudator temporis acti,* and his stories of the old days were deeply interesting, though unfortunately not always of a character suitable for publication. There were strange scenes in the palace in those past times, and among the favoured guests and employés of the monarch were certain Europeans, such as Claude Martin;—very able men, whose lives if written would have been curious reading. Zoffani the artist has depicted some of these scenes.

It is no doubt the fact that when we annexed Oudh, the Court of Lucknow was a sink of sensuality and corruption, and reform under existing conditions was practically hopeless. It is interesting to view at Hussainabad the gallery of pictures of the rulers of Oudh. The strong determined appearance of the earlier satraps sent from Delhi is in striking contrast with that of their effeminate successors in later days.

Fyzabad ("beautiful residence") lies nearly a hundred miles to the north-east of Lucknow, and was formerly the capital of Oudh. The Nawab Shujah-ud-Dowlah had a palace and fort here,

and here also lived the celebrated Bhow Begum his widow, who left a large portion of her fortune to the British Government. A stately mausoleum was erected and maintained out of the bequest, and the remainder was principally bestowed in pensions upon members of the royal family.

Round Ajoodhya (Ayoodhya or Oudh), a small but holy town on the river Gogra some four miles from Fyzabad, cluster some of the oldest traditions of the land. It is mentioned frequently in the Puranas and Mahabharata: Rama was the son of the king of Ayoodhya. Here reigned Cacoosta Rajah, descended from Vivaswata (the sun born) Menu, and his successors filled the land and spread over the earth. This is the cradle of the two great races of the Suriyas (children of the sun) and Chandras (children of the moon). The former reigned in Oudh (certain of the royal families in Rajputana claim descent from them); and the latter over Pratisthana between the Jumna and Ganges. The modern Ajoodhya consists, like Hardwar, largely of a collection of temples, and residences of the great Indian princes and chieftains; and, again resembling the latter locality, is a very sacred bathing place. The site is raised, and much embellished by groves of magnificent tamarinds, and legend has it that an avenue of these shady and beautiful trees once extended in an unbroken line from here to Lucknow, very many miles away.

The most casual observer can hardly fail to note

the change in the appearance and demeanour of the middle and lower classes when he passes from the city of Lucknow into the country. A few miles suffice to bring the traveller into contact with a manly industrious race of good physique, and totally different to the low-type residents of the large and decayed centre of population. Among the headmen of villages are many than whom more courteous and dignified men it would be difficult to find in such a position anywhere else in India. The rural population of Oudh was of course the principal source from which the old Indian army was recruited, and when the dark days of '57 are recalled, a shadow rests upon its reputation. But at this distance of time, looking dispassionately at the matter, perhaps it may be conceded that there is possibly something to be said as regards the Oudh troops in extenuation of their revolt, though not for the barbarous incidents which followed it. The annexation of Oudh was most bitterly resented. The masses, ignorant and suspicious of change, followed their natural and known leaders as they had ever done, and would probably do again. These landed gentlemen were extremely dissatisfied, as was indeed to be expected. The disbanding of the king of Oudh's troops, again, had thrown thousands of disaffected men loose upon the country, and most of them were relatives and countrymen of our own sepoys. The latter had, with much reason, been praised and patted on the back until

they had unfortunately formed exaggerated ideas of their own power and importance. The Nawab's forces, moreover, included wild spirits from all parts of India; and indeed this part of the country was, as Sir Henry Lawrence said, a veritable Alsatia. This wise man, who was so soon to perish, saw the danger clearly, and, writing in '56, urged the garrisoning of Oudh by Punjab regiments instead of by the local levies and police, but without success. Here were elements of trouble so powerful that the lighting up of a conflagration needed but the application of a match, and probably incidents such as the issuing of greased cartridges were of altogether secondary importance in the causation of the revolt in this part of the country.

Sir Henry lies in the little churchyard in the Residency grounds under a stone which bears at his own request his name and the simple words, "Who tried to do his duty." No more modest or truer epitaph was ever written.

That the state of anarchy and corruption into which the administration of Oudh had fallen justified interference, is apparent from the reports of Generals Outram, Sleeman, and others—and Sleeman especially, from his extended tour, had a special opportunity of gauging the situation; but that the inhabitants of the rural areas regarded their condition as so deplorable as it appeared to us, is extremely doubtful. There is always a tendency to suppose that individuals less favour-

ably situated than ourselves must look upon their lives and disabilities as we should were we in their places, but if this were really the case, revolution would be the order of the day. The author has been fortunate in the possession of the confidence of many loyal and intelligent Indian gentlemen, as also of men of lesser degree, and has often discussed such matters with them. They denied that the masses were down-trodden and discontented in the pre-annexation days, and what they said in substantiation of their views had considerable reason in it. They acknowledged the incessant warfare always going on between the various minor potentates which (they said) had come to be regarded as a normal state of affairs, but they contended that in this very fact lay the protection of the ryot and the lower classes from rack-renting and oppression by their over-lords. They pointed out that such action on the part of a landowner would have inevitably led to the desertion of his followers, their emigration from his land, and their enlistment under the banners of his enemies; and that it would not have been long before the diminution in the fighting strength of a rapacious tyrant would have laid him open to attack and probable extinction by one of his more powerful and reinforced opponents. These inter-family and inter-tribal feuds were excessively bitter, and had existed often for generations. It was certainly an observed fact during the Mutiny that one of the first acts of a petty ruler when he took the

field was, not to place his forces at the disposal of the authorities, but to fall upon an hereditary foe who had espoused the opposite cause. A few were loyal (if it be so regarded), and others sat on the fence with considerable ultimate advantage to themselves; but, as a rule, there was no compromise about the action of the Oudh landowners, and there was little of the astuteness displayed which is said to have characterised the conduct of Scottish chieftains during the risings of the Pretenders. In more than one instance a "Taluqdar" escorted the Europeans in his neighbourhood to a place of safety, and then took the field against us and fought to the bitter end. One looks in vain, however, for much indication of what we should call true patriotism or sympathy with the unsuccessful defender of his country throughout these troublous times; and when the rising tide of British success showed indubitably what the result of the struggle would be, the welcome of the refugee sepoy in his village home was far from comforting, and he was frequently deprived of his loot, and escorted out of the settlement to seek an asylum elsewhere.

A perusal and consideration of this portion of Indian history creates the impression that, as regards the annexation, at the onset there was a good deal of vacillation at headquarters, and the eventual fulfilment of the desires and wishes of the more determined men. Then came the reckoning — the great upheaval — the usual dis-

appearance from the scene of the holders of fictitious reputations,—and the entry of the quiet giants. There is a good deal of the primitive savage lurking in the nature of all men, and when once blood flows freely all races get very close together. Both sides "saw red" (it is stated that the relieving troops were not allowed to look into the well at Cawnpore), but, after much suffering and misery, order and peace were presently restored to the land. It has been cynically noted that where the retributive blows fell heaviest, are just the spots where tranquillity is most conspicuous to-day. The whole tragic episode is better forgotten in India—as indeed it nearly is—but remembered in England. Casual students of the history of this period are most interested in the descriptions of the gallant deeds which resulted in the suppression of the Mutiny,—more profit perhaps would attend the consideration of the events which led up to it.

Barely twenty years had elapsed since these events when the author first found himself in Oudh, but even then both races appeared to have buried the hatchet, and to have tacitly agreed to let the memory of those sad times pass into oblivion. It was curious, for instance, to hear officers whose regiments had mutinied finding excuses for the conduct of their men—whatever they might say about others. But although race feeling had largely died down, the able men constituting the old Oudh Commission (a mixture

of selected military and civil officers) found a hard task in introducing and establishing order and system among a population in which anarchy and chaos had existed for generations. The late Nawab's writ had really only run in portions of his possessions. At the time of which the author writes, violent crime was terribly prevalent; poisoners lay in wait for the unsuspecting traveller with whom they fraternised on the lonely road; and the district held several large bands of armed marauders known as "dacoits," who robbed indiscriminately—burning villages and torturing men and women to make them disclose the spots where their treasures were hidden. The European community in the district to which the writer was posted consisted of but five persons—four officials and one lady. The Deputy Commissioner (or District Officer) and the Joint Magistrate were both senior and experienced members of the Covenanted Civil Service, of the type which Indian greybeards to-day call "the old sahibs,"—opinionated no doubt, but courteous, determined, and honourable men, with a full appreciation of what is meant by the expression *noblesse oblige.* The Superintendent of Police was a colonel in the old Oudh Military Police, and was a survivor of the massacre of Delhi. The Deputy Collector was an ex-bandsman in a British regiment who had received his appointment for conspicuous services during the late disturbances, and was an unscientific but excellent naturalist; and the present writer,

who was what was then termed a "grif," held the post of Civil Surgeon. The lady (who should have come first) was the wife of one of the civilians, and was a kind sensible woman, who more or less mothered us all. We saw our fellow-countrymen only at long intervals, but our work was constant and interesting, and it was in the companionship, and under the instruction, of those wise old friends, that the author imbibed that attachment to the country and its people which has never left him in after life. The glamour which surrounds India for the new arrival had evaporated, but the sentiment of disgust which commonly accompanies disillusionment, had also nearly passed away. The Anglo-Indian usually goes through three phases in his mental attitude towards the average native of India. In the first, the courteous and obliging manner, the dignity of the better classes, the unexpected intelligence, and the evident desire to please—all set in a novel and interesting environment—produce a most favourable impression upon him. This is the stage at which the "grif" and the "globe-trotter" arrive. After a variable period, which has been known to extend to six months, a reaction sets in. The European is staggered by the recognition of the fact that it is unsafe to believe anything he hears, and that there is hardly an incident in his life, in which Indians are concerned, which may not be part of an organised scheme of dissimulation and intrigue to attain an object which he has never even

suspected. Day by day it will be borne in upon him that the people very rarely trust one another, and that (*pace* Max Müller) mendacity is regarded, if discreditable at all, as a very venial offence. He discovers that although, if properly directed and led, the inhabitants of the country can be rendered effective and reliable, they are individually rarely capable of initiative, and seldom thorough in anything they undertake. He finds that the knowledge he at first admired is superficial, and often but a mere veneer over a mass of crude superstition and deep-rooted prejudices. What he hears about the social and intellectual position of the women in their homes is repugnant to his Western ideas on the subject. He notes that there is an almost complete absence of the altruistic spirit, the sense of public duty and moral courage, in the community, and that the worst motives are commonly assigned for any action not understood. No doubt, in his revulsion of feeling, his views are exaggerated, but the recognition of these facts engenders sentiments of contempt and dislike, and when it is further learnt that these people look upon him as an outcast, the position is not improved. This is the point at which the average "men-sahib" halts.

There is, however, fortunately, a third and last stage which is eventually reached by the experienced Anglo-Indian, when his attitude becomes far more philosophical and just. He becomes tolerant of Eastern views on the subject of veracity;

credits little that he hears, and says so; although this rude bluntness is very little resented. He receives all suggestions warily—looking round for the subtle design which underlies the most simple proceeding or remark. Such things cease to annoy him, and the intriguer comes to understand the cynical smile of the listener, and respects him for it. But he has been learning other things meanwhile. He has learnt to admire the respect and obedience of children to parents, the affection of parents for their children, the widespread charity to poor relations, the attachment of Indians to "sahibs" who have gained their confidence; their physical courage and devotion under trusted leaders, their careful observance of religious duties, their patience under suffering, their respect for order and authority, that they are far more truthful among themselves—and many other amiable traits. He never loses his sense of superiority to the race at large, but he has come to discriminate, to look below the surface, to sift the wheat from the chaff, and he now numbers among his friends many Indians of all classes,—shrewd, trustworthy, and loyal men. He has long ago become capable of looking at things from the point of view of those about him—a strangely distorted one possibly, according to Western ideas, but part of conditions which it is necessary to recognise and consider. His attitude has crystallised into what has been described as that of a benevolent autocrat; and he probably must be both or neither. This combina-

tion in a European is too usual to be fortuitous —it is naturally evolved as the result of long residence in India, and is probably what the people of that country most admire and appreciate. Their highest term of praise for the administration of an individual or a government is that it is parental.

We had few social functions. Once, indeed, we received orders to meet a certain train at our nearest railway station to pay obeisance to an important person who had temporarily descended from Olympus, and this necessitated a great turning out of articles of attire which had long reposed forgotten in boxes. At intervals, it is true, we had seen them hung out to dry in the sun by our Indian servants, but the dark and formal vestments of the West looked too funereal in the brightness of an Indian sun, and had been returned each time to their tombs, until the creases (all formed, by the efforts of the "bearer," in the wrong places) had become fixed and irremoveable. Into these sombre and archaic garments we now squeezed ourselves, and waited, looking very like a line of early Victorian dog-stealers, on the railway platform for the coming of the great man. But there was one feature of the show which redeemed it from the commonplace, and that was the Deputy Commissioner's tall hat. This ancient relic, flat of brim, slightly bulging in, from the prolonged influence of climate, at the sides, and which had exchanged its pristine glossy blackness

for a mouldy green, loomed up like some venerable and hoary tower above a collection of vulgar and (fairly) modern structures round it—to the joy and glory of its owner! The interview was short and unattended with incident, and the potentate himself was disappointing. Apart from a hauteur which would have excited remark in an emperor, but which was perhaps justified by our appearance, he presented no unusual features. The obscurity of the writer saved him from contact with the Presence, and thereby enabled him to answer, in an aside, the interested inquiry of one of the staff with whom he happened to have had a former acquaintance, as to who was "the scarecrow in the topper." Of suchwise is the glory of this world!

We lived literally among the people, spending a good portion of our time in camp and mixing freely with the Indian noblemen and gentry. This was before the days of Local Self-Government so few official meetings were held, but the officers were accessible to all, and nobody could be sure of, not merely what the "Burra Sahib" (the Deputy Commissioner) knew, but also, more important still, what he did not know. As said before, Indians trust one another very little. A story is told of a distinguished military administrator in the north-west of India who had received secret information that a rising had been arranged among the leaders of certain wild tribes on the frontier, and he knew not only the date fixed for

the disturbance, but also the names of the head-men implicated. He proceeded into their country and called them, together with others who had no share in the contemplated *émeute*, nominally to discuss some border question of no great importance. Each leader was summoned separately to his tent and granted an audience lasting a few minutes. With the innocent men he talked freely about the object of the meeting, but when the principal ring-leader was ushered into his presence, he continued writing and keeping silence for nearly an hour, and then abruptly asked, "How is your parrot?" On receiving some surprised reply, he rose and courteously dismissed his visitor. The conference was to have been continued in the morning, but when day broke, all the disaffected headmen had vanished! It appeared that all the men had met together in the dark, and had discussed what had transpired at the interviews. Not one of them believed the story of the owner of the imaginary parrot, and rapidly concluding that he had really given them all away, had gathered their belongings together and bolted. The rising never occurred.

A somewhat similar case occurred within the knowledge of the writer himself. Certain influential and discontented shopkeepers in a large city had arranged on an appointed date to close the bazaar—*i.e.*, to shut all shops by way of a protest—a time-honoured Eastern expedient giving rise to much inconvenience and excitement, and certain to call general public attention to a

grievance. The District Officer, in full possession of the facts, suddenly marched out in the heavy rain to a spot some twenty miles from the city, set up his tent in the jungles, called on an unimportant local trial for the date fixed for the demonstration, and subpœnaed the whole of the ringleaders to give evidence on some point or another at his temporary court on that day. He kept those witnesses out there in considerable discomfort until the date was past, and then summoning them and recording their valueless depositions, smilingly dismissed the case. In the absence of the agitators, the whole thing ended in a fizzle. The incident caused much amusement in the city, covered the shopkeepers with ridicule, and was regarded by the people as an extremely astute move—which indeed it was.

Oudh is essentially a rural province, and although there are but few important centres of population, there are over 24,000 villages. These, which have been described elsewhere, are situated mostly on elevations raised above the level of the surrounding country, and sometimes possess little mud forts. Small strongholds of this description, the property of petty rajahs and suchlike, are not uncommon, and their existence is only one of the many indications of the lawless character of the population in the past. Another notable feature is the almost complete absence of any pretentious residences in the rural areas; and the explanation of this is said to be that when the Nawab heard of

anyone displaying signs of state or opulence, he at once marked him down as a possible source of danger, or as an individual from whom money could be squeezed. These raised village sites, known as "dihs," are formed by the falling down of old mud huts and the erection of new ones on their ruins (an Eastern custom for which exploring Assyriologists have reason to be grateful), and since nearly every courtyard to a hut has cattle tied up in it during the night, the result is that the soil of such localities has become saturated with salts derived from organic matters. A class of labourers known as "looniyas" often extract these salts by passing the earth, dissolved in water, through rough reed screens—separating the chlorides from the nitrates by boiling, and selling the latter to native factories, where coarse gunpowder, used mostly for fireworks, is manufactured under the supervision of the authorities.

An authoress, describing her early impressions of mud villages in the East, speaks of them as possessing "a peculiar charm," and gives her reasons. "They give you a feeling of pressing very close to nature; they scarcely suggest human habitations, not because of their poverty but because of their simplicity of thought and absence of unnecessary labour." The description applies very well to Indian villages—although the particular point of view had not occurred to the writer. But he can understand the idea—they must structurally differ very little from what they were

thousands of years ago; but when a man has to keep himself and his wife and bring up a family on ten shillings a month, there is little opportunity of indulging in architectural hobbies. The owner builds his dwelling himself from materials on the spot, devoting as much care to the warding off of the Evil Eye during its erection, as a Western proprietor would to sanitary considerations.

In these little settlements the people cluster together, not only for safety but also for convenience; for every village is a unit complete in itself, and furnished with the craftsmen and menials required to satisfy their modest wants. As already stated, at the period of which the author writes, there were many bands of wandering freebooters in this part of the country whose presence made residence in an outlying hut or hamlet extremely risky both as regards life and property. The leader of one such band, Hoolass by name, was a great source of worry to the magistrate and police at the time. He came of a good but impoverished family, and was a man of considerable character—never robbing the poor, but even often bestowing charity upon them—as a consequence of which no assistance was ever forthcoming from among the villagers which would have led to his capture. His prey was the rich shopkeeper or moneylender, and his hand was against all authority. Caught and convicted at last through the medium of a Delilah, he promised the judge who tried the case, and the "tehsildar"

(an Indian official who is the right hand of the magistrate) who had brought him to book, that he would have his revenge. The local jail only held him for a short time, and soon after his escape, the judge found, on waking in his house one morning, a notice pinned to his breast, "from Hoolass, who could have killed you." His retaliation on the "tehsildar" was more serious, for, waylaying that portly official on a lonely road, he and his band stripped him stark naked and drove him in the shafts of his own little carriage into a village in broad daylight! He was a sort of Eastern Robin Hood, and delighted in effects. One Christmas day, the magistrate, who had gone for a short holiday with his camp into an adjoining district, unattended by any but a few personal servants, was surprised by the arrival of Hoolass and some half-dozen followers fully armed and dressed in gala attire (green velvet and gold lace), who respectfully presented him with the "dali" or little gift of fruit and vegetables which it is customary to offer to a superior on that day, and the acceptance of which denotes approval and friendliness. This was pretty cool for an outlaw, as he then was, but there was nothing to be done in the presence of this superior force, and the officer wisely accepted the situation and merely declined the gift with a laugh; whereupon the party, after respectfully "salaaming," marched off. Poor Hoolass, for whom the writer could not resist some kindly feelings, was re-caught soon after and

sent to a strong central prison, from which, however, he again escaped; but the third time he was not so lucky, and was sent to the Andamans, where, it is believed, he died. His was a case of a good man gone wrong.

This indignity offered to the "tehsildar," who held an important position with magisterial powers, led, it is remembered, to his early transfer, at his own request, to a similar appointment in a distant part of the country into which the story was not likely to have penetrated—for his "izzat" (honour or self-respect) was deeply injured. In this case, of course, the insult was outrageous, but in ordinary contact with Indian gentlemen, too much care cannot be taken to avoid offending their very delicate susceptibilities regarding courtesy and convention. Any form of badinage or flippancy is held to be a mark of rank vulgarity. The dignity of even a petty landowner is admirable, and "izzat" among all the respectable classes is most jealously guarded. An incident occurred in the district which made a great impression upon the author. It was a portion of his duties to examine and report upon all bodies sent in by the police in which there was any suspicion of foul play. One morning, on arrival at the mortuary, he was shown the corpses of two persons—one that of a young girl of fair complexion, and the other that of a young man about twenty-five years of age, good looking, but with somewhat coarse features. It struck both the

Indian medical assistant and the writer at once that the girl was of high, and the man of low, caste. There was no question about the cause of death—the heads of both had been smashed in with some weapon like a hatchet. The case was evidently unusual, familiarised as we were with such incidents, and a call was made on the magistrate, who said that a most respectable Brahman landowner had just come in and reported having killed his daughter and a low-caste man with whom he found she had an intrigue. He sent for the Brahman, a fine, tall, gentlemanly man of about sixty years of age, who quietly narrated how he had found the two together and killed them with an axe while they slept. He had then walked in some twenty miles, bringing with him a bundle of clean white clothes which he had exchanged for his blood-stained garments before coming into the magistrate's presence. As he was a man of excellent character and known to be an affectionate father, the matter created an extraordinary amount of interest in the locality. The case was committed to the Sessions, where the writer gave evidence, and he can see to-day the old man in the dock, relating with calm dignity all the details of the murder, and ending up with the words, "And if it be the will of God that I should be hanged, so be it, for my 'izzat' is gone." The court was packed with interested spectators, and at these words a murmur of applause rolled through the building. He was

of course convicted, but, the circumstances of the case being taken into consideration, the penalty was very light. There was probably not a man or woman in that court who did not regard the crime as perfectly justified, or who did not extol the clemency of the judge. The punishment of female frailty in India is, it is suspected, often swift and irregular, and when a woman is found dead at the bottom of a well, the evidence of the villagers is not always readily forthcoming.

The simple life of the villager is much the same all over Upper India, and has been roughly sketched elsewhere. He is an industrious man, and very frequently has a great incentive to labour in the fact that he is working for himself. There is certainly no unseemly haste about his movements as a rule—he rests at intervals and consoles himself with his "hookah" (a weird article consisting of a cocoa-nut full of water with two reeds projecting from it above; one surmounted by an earthenware receptacle for tobacco and fire, and the other the one to which he applies his lips), but it must not be forgotten that he sees the sun rise and set while at his labour, and a good deal of leisurely work can be got through in this space of time. Apart from the care of the household, his wife often helps him in the lighter agricultural operations, such as weeding, planting out rice, &c.; she has the drawing of the water from the well in an earthen pitcher suspended by a cord; she has to grind the corn in the little

mill in the hut, assisted by a female relation or friend (for it is very hard work); and there are the meals to prepare for her husband and children. Once the latter are weaned, they subsist on very much the same food as the rest of the family —unleavened cakes, boiled rice, pulses, and vegetables, all made savoury by oil, salt, spices, and condiments. She and her children will only eat after her husband has finished, and indeed in all outward observances, even in walking, will give him precedence.

Nearly every woman in India is, or has been, married, and nearly every man has a large family. The birth-rate per thousand is about thirty-nine, but the infantile death-rate is distressingly high. The average total death-rate per thousand of population is something like thirty-four, but it is the mortality among the children under one year of age which largely accounts for this; for nearly a quarter of those born will not survive infancy. This is a very grievous matter; but when children are hurried into the world without any regard to such considerations as the means of adequately supporting them, it is in the nature of things that the struggle for existence should be hard, and indeed it is very much a question of the survival of the fittest. They suffer from no particular form of disease, and the mortality is not attributable to any specific causes with which the philanthropist or sanitarian can effectually deal. The parents are affectionate and do their best, but

the average village child among the lower classes grows up very much like a puppy.

The registration of births and deaths is better carried out in some localities than in others—the neglect to record female births is probably the most important omission. In a country where filial obligations are acknowledged and complied with, the possession of a family of sons is in the nature of an insurance, and, moreover, a son must carry out his father's obsequies; but it is different as regards girls. An unmarried daughter is a shame to her parents, and as she should marry in her own caste, the number of available eligible husbands is limited. Hence the custom of bestowing dowries with the bride, and the provision of these, and the extravagant method of carrying out the marriage ceremonies, are (especially among Hindus) the causes of most of the debts with which the villager is so often encumbered. The birth of a female child, therefore, is not often welcomed, and in this fact may possibly to a certain extent lie the explanation of her inferior position in the community—although regarding this a good deal of misconception exists, and the subservient demeanour which excites the commiseration of kindly observers is very often nothing more distressing than good manners. There are probably few points upon which more crass ignorance has been displayed than upon the subject of the so-called degradation of women in the East. Especially is this the case as regards the position of Muham-

madan women, and people who should have known better, have not only written and stated that the religion of Islam denies to females the possession of a soul or the right to admission into Paradise, but have even introduced the alleged fact into arguments and discussions relating to the position of the sexes. The statement is absolutely incorrect, and the Koran is most explicit upon the point. It would be easy to quote numerous passages in proof of this, but one taken from chapter xiii. v. 70 should suffice. It runs: "Enter into Paradise, ye and *your wives*, happy." Few women indeed have enjoyed the confidence and affection of their husbands more than did Muhammad's favourite wife A'isha, and she was honoured on her death by the titles of "Prophetess" and "Mother of the Faithful." After uttering her name and that of other saintly women, Muhammadans usually add, "May they find acceptance with Allah." It is recorded in the "Hadeth," the "Traditional Sayings" of Muhammad, that he definitely stated that another of his wives, Khadija (his first convert), had been, to his divine knowledge, admitted into Paradise as a reward for her faith.

The usual crops are those grown in the United Provinces generally. The opium poppy (*Papaver somniferum*) was, at the time of which the author writes, much grown in Oudh, and the extensive fields of this plant with its large white flowers, added a good deal to the beauty of the landscape.

As soon as the petals have fallen, little nicks are made in the green capsules, and the fluid which exudes from them is scraped off every morning, placed in earthen vessels, and presently taken to the Government depôt, presided over by an officer of the Opium Department. The fiat has gone forth that this industry is to be at all events reduced in extent. It is futile to enter into a controversy on the subject, but the writer has gone a little into the matter (he was once president of an official committee to inquire into the sale of deleterious drugs — more especially of cocaine), and very much questions whether, so far as India is concerned, any action in this direction was really called for. He has seldom seen instances of excess in the consumption of the drug except among the few habitués of opium dens in large cities, and the average man takes it as a medicine occasionally, or as a member of the well-to-do classes in England might indulge in a glass of port wine after dinner. It is held in considerable popular esteem as a remedy against malaria and dysentery. It is too expensive to be used extensively by the poorer people. At all events, under the existing system the consumer obtains a pure and unadulterated article, and inasmuch as it is generally conceded that you cannot make a man virtuous by Act of Parliament, the individual addicted to such a form of self-indulgence would, if thwarted, probably take to some other, and very likely more pernicious, solace.

Two facts are worth considering in this connection, and one is that at present drunkenness in the country is quite uncommon, and the other is that the waste land and jungles furnish many readily accessible plants, such as Indian hemp (*Cannabis Indica*), &c., which can be always drawn upon in the absence of the present more popular narcotic. So far as concerns the political aspect of restrictions on this production, the average native of India would regard them as he does most administrative vagaries. He would be perfectly incredulous if informed that we were sacrificing a large revenue from philanthropic motives, and—regrettable as it may be—would cast about for some other and more probable explanation of such a mysterious enactment; and in this he would most likely be assisted by the agitator. The Indian masses as a rule have confidence in our good intentions, but the why and wherefore of any action not easily intelligible must be explained to them, and the difficulty is to find the machinery for doing this. Even such an obviously kindly act as the distribution of relief in famine times was at first regarded with distrust and suspicion; though these of course soon came to be removed. It is a hard position for a government to be in when the meaning of its most benevolent efforts is often only fully understood by those most interested in misrepresenting the facts, but so it is, and it is perhaps just as well to recognise the existence of this suspicious mental attitude on the part of

the masses when introducing legislative procedure of which the meaning is not perfectly clear.

Smallpox in those days was a terrible scourge in the province; not only carrying off great numbers of people by death, but also frequently leaving the victim, when he survived, totally blind or disfigured. The introduction and control of vaccination operations formed an important portion of the author's work for many years during his extended tours over this part of the country, and the subject is particularly brought forward as an instance of how social economic reforms may best be initiated and carried out in India. There were strong religious objections to the operation, since a goddess was concerned in the appearance of smallpox, and the people were bitterly opposed to any interference. No formal orders were issued on the subject, but all district officials used their influence, then very great, to persuade the Indian nobility, gentry, and more intelligent persons, to help to explain the intentions and wishes of the Government to the people. No actual compulsion was ever employed, but with extreme difficulty a start was made by vaccinating a few low-caste children in each village—no attempt being made to force the operation on the higher castes. As time wore on and the disease swept every year over the land, it came to be noticed that the vaccinated people escaped, and presently, quite insensibly, and as the result of observation and conviction, all classes

came to see and appreciate the merits of the system. So tactfully did the district officers work that little or no friction occurred; the staff of operators was gradually increased; and the writer lived to see the women who had formerly fled with their children into the jungles when he approached their villages, press forward with confidence to accept the protection offered. The smallpox mortality tables over a period of years tell their own story.

Although there was no big game in the district, there was abundance of other kinds of sport, and the numerous stretches of water swarmed with wild-fowl of all descriptions. We also kept a nondescript collection of dogs known as a "bobbery pack," and had many a good run after a jackal or the nimble little plains fox. Then a neighbouring rajah kept hawks, and sometimes accompanied us on riding parties with these birds in the early morning. Black-buck were plentiful, and in some localities wild pig could be found and ridden with the spear. Of course the writer, as Civil Surgeon, was more tied to the settlement than the other officials, for there were the hospital and jail to be seen to. But as regards the former, a very unpretentious building with very little accommodation for in-patients, it could usually be safely left to the care of a veteran Pathan doctor who had accompanied Dr Brydon in the disastrous retreat from Cabul in '42, and who had escaped destruction by his youth and insignificance and the fact of his being a Muhammadan of the north.

The old man was very disinclined to speak of his adventures, which, it is suspected, were not characterised by any remarkable heroism or devotion.

Sporting trips into the interior, it may be mentioned, were commonly made by Civil Surgeons in the smaller districts in those times, and were very useful in rendering the hospitals popular and of real use to the villagers. Some of these officers in earlier days had not been very keen about professional work. In a certain station with which the writer was familiar, was an apothecary of mixed extraction (whom we will call Brown), who had just retired after a long but not particularly strenuous career, and between whom and his official superiors there appeared to have been some friction. Mr Brown had relieved his feelings previous to his departure by noting in pencil, in the last departmental report in the office, his opinions regarding certain Civil Surgeons and his administrative superiors. The comments on those among the former who had been commended by Government for zeal, were terse and severely critical—such as, "a pet," "a fraud," "a butcher," "dangerous," "bloodthirsty," &c. The Surgeon-General was described as "a Simla parasite," and the Secretary who had compiled the review, as a "self-sufficient ass." The cause of this rancour was disclosed in the brief paragraph in the report on the officer's own work, and the description of himself as "slothful" and "deficient in professional know-

ledge." This had been evidently too much for Mr Brown, who, scorning any explanation or defence, had contented himself with writing against the observation, the word "liar," underlined, on the margin!

Under the auspices of such an official, a hospital, as may be surmised, would not have flourished, and its existence would have been hardly known outside the settlement. Early in the eighties, under the stimulus given by certain administrative medical officers, a wave of professional enthusiasm swept over the country, and every method was adopted to win the confidence of the masses and induce them to come to these institutions; and to this end it was necessary to go to the people themselves. It was possible on these expeditions to sit under the council tree with the elders of the village, and to call together and talk to the sufferers from various afflictions, and, where anything to relieve could be done, to dispel their fears and to arrange for their removal in country carts to the hospital for treatment. This plan for popularising these institutions was, as said, generally practised and with excellent results, all over the provinces, and the amount of work, surgical especially, done in some of them, was astonishing. The political effect of the ministrations of the medical profession in India has not been perhaps sufficiently recognised. The members of no service or class get into such close touch with the inner life and thoughts of the people in all grades of Indian society. The

"doctor sahib" is the only European male who is ever admitted behind the "purdah."

The control of the jail was a rather more difficult matter to arrange for, since, on account of the amount of crime, there was always a considerable number of dangerous criminals in custody, and it was necessary therefore to put an Indian deputy magistrate in charge and one was not always available. It is unpleasant enough to have to give the word of command which hurries a fellow-being into eternity, but it is worse still when the victim has been for a long while under your charge and you have come to know him well. The writer, in later years, was appointed to the Jail Department for a time, but the work was not congenial, and he never got over his repugnance to carrying out the death penalty. The condemned invariably met their fate with stoicism and apparent indifference, and one mounted the gallows chewing sweetmeats.

As the memory of childhood's events survives that of many far more important ones in later life, so the recollection of one's first independent official appointment and its incidents, stands out prominently after all these years. But however interesting they may be to the individual, they are not likely to be so to the reader; and indeed it must be confessed that, despite its attractions, there was a considerable sameness about this isolated life. When the rainy season set in and we were perforce confined almost entirely to the settlement, life became very dull. There was no club, library,

racquet-court, or swimming-bath; and golf, which would have been a godsend as a form of recreation, was then almost unknown in India. Our only dissipations were lawn tennis and whist. It was a relief, therefore, when one day a yellow envelope marked "State Urgent" was handed to the writer. Its contents were laconic. The defeat at Maiwand had just occurred, and the telegram ran, "Join—regiment marching to Morar." A second one later in the day from the commanding officer, stated that we were to join the field force for the relief of Kandahar, and a week later we were blundering over the stones in the dismal Bolan Pass on our way to the front. But that, as Kipling would say, is another story.

IV.

AN EASTERN VOYAGE.

SCENE: a late October morning on the departure platform of a London terminus. *Dramatis personæ:* passengers starting for the East. The last good-byes are said, the whistle sounds, and the "special" tears through the fertile fields of Kent, ignoring all the familiar stopping-places, and thus bearing in upon us the first recognition of the fact that we have broken touch with home and its circumscribed environment, and are spreading our pinions, like birds of passage, for a longer, wider flight.

No link is furnished at Dover—the train runs along the pier to the side of the steamer, and with a celerity and display of intelligent organisation which it will be long before we experience again, we, with our luggage, &c., are embarked—to undergo perhaps the most trying and uncomfortable piece of travel which we shall encounter on our whole journey of some six thousand miles. Then comes Calais with entraining, and a rush through smiling France, broken by a glimpse of

lit-up pleasant Paris, sleep (where it comes to those who have left dear ones at home)—and then daylight, bright sunshine, and Marseilles.

The "special" proceeds direct to the quay, and here lies the great ship which is to be our home for the next fortnight or so; with a little smoke issuing from the funnels, and the blue-peter streaming from the mast. A feverish time succeeds our arrival. Is the baggage all right? What is the cabin like, and who are our companions in it? Do we know any one on board, &c., &c.? We are discovered and appropriated by stewards in their shirt-sleeves, who have identified us by hieroglyphics on our belongings, and who will minister to our wants on the voyage. It is a bustling scene. Superior beings in gold stripes issue orders; agents are rushing about with letters and telegrams for passengers; deck-chairs are being bundled on board; an incessant cackling issues from crates full of geese and fowls passed in through the open gangways; discordant sounds well up from itinerant musicians on the shore; strings of lascars and porters struggle up the broad ladders with heavy boxes and baggage—there is a very babel of tongues, and all is apparently chaos. "Klang-a, klang-a, klang-a, klang-a," goes the ship's bell with an excited reduplicated sound, and the boatswain's pipe is heard shrilly calling. Asiatics, in unfamiliar garb, with brimless straw-hats bound round with red "puggris," run along the deck trailing huge hawsers; a little

puffing tug bears up in front of the great vessel; the donkey-engine clatters as it lifts the great ladders and hoists them back to the shore—thud, thud, go the great propellers—a feeble cheer, and we are off.

In a few hours all has settled down. We are past the little island with its legend familiar to readers of Dumas; the fussy little tug has cast us off; passengers are below, wondering how on earth they can ever sleep in the small cabin with all that luggage to be bestowed somewhere; the decks are washed, cleared, and tidied up; a few experienced travellers are digging out their own deck-chairs from the stack of others; and the unhappy purser is at bay in his den, attacked by a crowd of excited ladies all armed with numerous and important grievances and requirements, most inadequately met and dealt with by that callous and imperturbable man. About his demeanour and probable social extraction there is a consensus of opinion, but it is only fair to add that he has adopted this hedgehog attitude as the only possible method of preserving his reason, and will, later on, emerge as a totally different and entirely amiable character.

Once fairly at sea, discipline and order assert themselves with an overwhelming force. The routine of the ship goes on just the same whether the passengers be peers or bagmen. But it is not the man who lives in a castle and is served by scores of menials, who gives trouble—Hades, in

the purser's creed, is inhabited almost entirely by lady's-maids and lactiferous cows. Possibly in these later days his views have become extended, but this particular voyage which lingers in the memory was undertaken many years ago, and before the mellifluous accents of Chicago floated on the Eastern breeze, or the bulky form of the Indian potentate so often cast its curious shadow on the deck. Our party consisted practically of army men, Government officials in the various Indian civil departments, planters, barristers, merchants, &c.—many of them accompanied by their wives and a sprinkling of children. We had several "spins" going out to be married—immediately, or *in posse;* a couple of missionaries; an authoress of more particularly mental attractions, seeking facts or their substitutes in pastures new; and a few unclassified individuals who will yield, later on, not the least interesting information and entertainment in our lengthy and discursive conversations during the voyage.

Life on board ship, it must be conceded, always has a considerable sameness, and the traveller is well advised who takes with him a few books of some little depth on any particular subject in which he may be interested or feels inclined to study. We rise, breakfast, smoke, lunch, walk, indulge in restricted athletics, dine in some splendour, sing or are sung to, smoke the last cigar, and so, as old Pepys would say, to bed. We run

through the Straits of Bonifacio and view the island which was the birthplace of that great man whom Carlyle so grudgingly admits into his list of heroes, and touch at Malta, where we visit, among other sights, the magnificent church dating from 1573, which holds the bones and monuments of four hundred of the valiant knights of St John; and probably wax indignant over the story of how the trumpet which we see in the palace, had been sounded when the warriors finally left the island and had only once been heard since, when a young woman took it out of its case to use it at a fancy-dress ball, and blew it again for the amusement of her empty-headed admirers. Think of the profanity! One wonders that she was not blasted on the spot.

On through seas where Grecian warships and Roman triremes wandered and fought; where the enterprising Phœnicians carried on their extensive maritime trade; and where Cleopatra, dallying with the infatuated Anthony, floated in her gorgeous bark with "purple sails, and so perfumed that the winds were love-sick with them." Port Said, then a nest of ruffians of all nations, castes, and creeds, detains us for some hours, and we go ashore to be out of the way and waste our money on unprofitable rubbish—for here we take in coal, and long lines of semi-nude savages, with an added blackness from coal-dust, skip up the long bending planks and shoot their burdens into the bunkers of the ship. At night this operation, performed

in the light from blazing torches, reminds one of a scene from the Inferno.

Presently we clean up, and glide into that important ditch which owes its construction to the talented M. de Lesseps, carrying out the dream of his great countryman Napoleon Bonaparte, but of which the conception goes back to the time of the Pharaohs; and watch the vast tracts of sand on either side more or less covered at intervals with sheets of shallow water upon which great flocks of cranes, storks, pelicans, flamingoes, and water-fowl are wading and feeding. It is a weird part of the voyage this, and we feel almost amphibious. We are carrying the mail now; and at the sight of the flag at our mast-head all ships crawling through the Canal give way and the crews moor to the bank to let us pass, with observations, useful in many countries of the world, but unsuited to a Sunday-school book. Getting a glimpse of picturesque Ismailia, we thread Lake Timsah and the Bitter Lakes, and next morning resume our maritime habits and are lying off Suez in the Gulf of that name.

Cold uncertain weather and the uncomfortable process of acquiring the accomplishment known as "getting your sea legs," have up till now resulted in an exhibition of constraint and desire for seclusion on the part of many of the passengers, very unfavourable to social amenities; but a change has come over the spirit of the scene. It

is extraordinary how the climate alters in such a short journey as is involved in a passage through the Canal. The variable skies of Europe, the boisterous weather of the Mediterranean, the huddling together under cover on deck from the biting wind, are all things of the past and only matters of unpleasant memory. As we gaze across the Gulf and note the glorious purple haze on the long grey mountains on the shore, we recognise that we are at last fairly in the gorgeous East. It is like entering a new world. The sun shines brightly in a cloudless sky; boats of unfamiliar but picturesque rig, manned by dusky mariners of villainous aspect, flit about us; a gentle breeze ruffles the blue water, though not sufficiently to disturb the flocks of kittiwakes and sea-gulls resting on the surface, or sailing with harsh cries round the ship on the look-out for scraps of food and garbage thrown out of the portholes by the stewards. Ladies are in white dresses and the men in flannels, and all are lounging in long chairs under the welcome shade of the double awning. We are out all day on the deck, and we seem to have shed our reserve with our thick garments. The smoking-room is empty; the piano has been hoisted on deck; the women-folk develop new attractions; and the men communicate their names to their fellow-travellers, and take their hands out of their pockets and off their watch-chains. Pallid and hitherto unseen individuals, supported by stewards and stewardesses bearing smelling-salts

and curious bowls, emerge staggering from the companion-way and subside groaning into long chairs. Frail subjects of Father Neptume these, who agree with Byron in regarding a ship as a floating prison, with a chance of getting drowned. Among such do our menials amass much wealth.

Twenty-four hours seem to have blended us all together, but of course the change has not really been so sudden. Cautious people have been taking stock of their neighbours all the time; but now a thaw has set in, Nature is set free, and it is like the breaking up of the ice in a northern river. On a voyage it is wise to be in no great hurry about making friendships, and it is interesting to observe how soon pretentious people are found out in the close relations involved in board-ship life. At the start a few blatant personalities dominate the situation, but their reign is short. A week later and they become known for the shallow things they are, and are as such neglected; their places being quietly taken by probably the most unsuspected people in the ship,—which is one of the little useful lessons learned in travel.

A smothered roar from the "syren," and we speed on our way down the Red Sea—both names designed on the "lucus a non lucendo" principle, for the "syren" speaks with the voice of an intoxicated Vulcan, and the Red Sea is blue. Given the right temperature, this is by far the most delightful part of the voyage. A mysterious man clad in blue jean has entered your cabin and opened the porthole during the night, and the sunlight dances

on the ceiling as you open your eyes at an hour which (assuming you are of temperate habits) you have until now conceived impossible of devotion to anything but sleep. You rise and gaze out of the opening, drinking in deep draughts of pure, fresh, balmy air, and watch the flying-fish making their short silvery flights, startled by the presence of the strange intruder into their haunts. The engines beat like the heart of some great monster, and the water glides past with a gentle swish against the side of the vessel. Enters the steward in deshabille and somewhat out of keeping with the poetic surroundings, but bearing a welcome cup of tea and some biscuits, and retires again after being delivered of a few remarks of a kindly but un-oriental character—bearing out your shoes to be pipe-clayed. Now for a plunge into a cool sea-bath before the rush of bathers accumulates in the corridors; a stroll on the newly washed-down deck; and a glimpse over the bows of the ship where the sharp prow cleaves the water and throws off a wall of liquid azure to either side as the good craft forges her way across the ocean. You will welcome the loud clanging of the ship's bell, and the more modest one of the head steward which presently denotes that breakfast is ready!

Very delightful indeed is sea travel in this part of the world at this time of the year, but the trail of the serpent, nevertheless, is over it all. Those who go down to the sea in ships know that this blue sparkling expanse of water is the home of

countless and ravenous sharks, and that to fall overboard probably means a horrible death. They know that these shores and hills, bathed in the soft languorous haze, are in reality sterile sandy wastes from which dusky Arab robbers and marauders would swoop down on the hapless castaway drifted up from the ocean; and that the coral zoophytes are incessantly working beneath the water, slowly building up the uncharted reef upon which some ill-fated craft may on any day strike; though she could perhaps have run over it safely a week before. One dark night we abruptly stop, and various ingenious and soothing reasons are assigned by the ship's officers; but the real one is that we have run down an Arab "dhow," probably carrying slaves across the water and showing no lights on account of her illicit occupation. The look-out had suddenly heard cries and the sound of crashing timbers under the bows of the great vessel—followed by silence and vacancy. A little unconsidered community had been blotted out of existence!

Little do we reck, however, of such matters in these lotus-eating days. The charm of the life is that you do not know how the day passes; but it is mostly in a long chair, and attended with a considerable consumption of tobacco. There are of course no letters or telegrams (Marconi was in swaddling-clothes when this voyage happened), but there is the ship's library (a sort of literary sillabub), and the discourse of your fellow-men

and women. If you select the quiet, unpretending men, you will probably learn at first hand a good deal about special lives and occupations well worth knowing, and this presumably is the case with the quiet, unpretending women, though the experiment is less often attempted. It is too hot, happily, for the vagaries of the young athlete, and a blessed peace reigns on the deck. This is the true "dolce far niente"—the ideal rest-cure!

Much of our peace of mind is due to our unquestioning faith in the Captain and his satellites. Most of us are habitually delivered of more or less unconvincing opinions upon almost every subject under the sun, but here, in this absolutely strange and unknown environment, we are literally at sea. The control of the machinery, the methods by which we unerringly reach a selected distant point almost to the hour, and many other details, are such deep mysteries to us that we feel it is almost blasphemous to attempt to explain them. Not that there is anything occult about our Palinurus. Though rumour has it that he is entrusted by the legislature with powers on shipboard transcending those of the Czar of All the Russias, he moves freely and courteously among us; replying to fatuous questions with facetiæ which he has culled and retained for effective use from the experience of other sea-dogs of his acquaintance exposed in the course of duty to similar persecution. Now and again, however, we are reminded of the rigid discipline which lies unsuspected below the surface

of the soft monotony of the routine work. A sudden violent clanging of the dreadful ship's bell calls the crew to quarters, and startled women to their cabin doors. Openings in the deck vomit forth denizens apparently of all the dim places of the earth, who have up till now been concealed somewhere in the bowels of the ship — tumbling over the sleepy and indignant old gentlemen in the chairs, and presently ranging themselves in long lines on the deck. This is a fire-parade, and after the Captain and officers have inspected with suitable dignity the parti-coloured swaying ranks, a whistle sounds and certain unimpressive hoses open fire (or rather water) on the sea, with the apparent intention of putting it out. But this parade, after all, is a very serious and important function—every member of the crew thereby learns his station and the boat he is to occupy, and if fire, shipwreck, or other unforeseen disaster befall us, we may learn to appreciate its value and expediency.

Of the stern necessity for strict discipline and efficient organisation, a striking example was presented to the writer on another voyage. One Sunday afternoon when we were all lounging under the awnings, a lascar dropped into the sea from where he was painting a boat hanging on the davits, and a cry of "man overboard" rang along the deck. Instantly a young army officer jumped over after him, and the wildest excitement reigned. A quartermaster promptly threw

overboard a life-buoy fitted with a device which lights on touching the water—bells tinkled below, and the engines immediately stopped — a sailor climbed to the masthead (for it is impossible to see a swimming man from the deck in rippling water)—and a boat was manned and lowered in an incredibly short space of time. A terrible period of anxiety followed its departure. The momentum of the ship had carried her a long way, and when she was turned round, all idea of direction in the trackless ocean was lost by the spectators. It may be half an hour elapsed, and then the boat was seen returning, and, gladdest sight of all, there were *two* men, besides the coxswain, sitting in the stern. What cheers rang out as they were lifted on board and the gallant, dripping officer was carried shoulder high to his cabin! They had reached the life-buoy and were hanging on to it when the boat, guided by the smoke of the flare, had reached them. As a matter of fact, the lascar was far the better swimmer of the two, but this in no way detracts from the heroism of the officer, who had at once obeyed the noble instincts of his nature — "his not to reason why." It was a miraculous escape, not only from drowning, but also from the still more horrible death from the numerous sharks which infest these seas. This was one of the incidents (which happen more frequently than perhaps Westerns wot of) the recital of which rings through Eastern bazaars, and renders the

ordinary native of India unresponsive when he hears the agitator denounce the cruelty and tyranny of the ruling race! Many friends will recognise this story.

Reading, whist, chess, and other non-strenuous amusements, fill in our time during the day, and impromptu dances, concerts, &c., serve to while away the evenings pleasantly enough. Once, too, we indulge in the dissipation of a "book tea," at which the first prize is unanimously awarded to the prim middle-aged lady who plays the organ on Sunday, and who has been unfortunately assisted in her selection of a book by an abandoned subaltern. It is 'Adam Bede' (the Christian name pronounced with biblical accuracy), which she illustrates by a large bead dangling on the front of her demurely-clad bust. "A bead, don't you see," she explains; and is gratified, but slightly perplexed, at the amount of hilarity which follows the announcement.

In all these lighter pursuits the ship's officers shine conspicuously, and it is a source of regret, from one point of view, that the possession of such attainments should have become involved in practice with unfortunate oversights as regards navigation, and thereby led sordid boards of management to issue orders of a repressive character regarding their exhibition. However, they have spared the doctor and the purser. On these occasions the conduct of the latter is a source of genuine joy. Where is the morose and unsym-



The Village Well.

pathetic individual who scowled at you from a table decorated with the portraits of the reigning beauties of the stage, and the name of the ship emblazoned on a large white model life-belt? Can this jocund and portly figure prancing on the deck in the mazy waltz, and whispering airy nothings, slightly tinged with nicotine, into his fair partner's ear, be the same person? Is this really the custodian of that much-sought-after but unsatisfactory animal, the ship's cow? Why, he is really a right good fellow, and our first impressions were altogether fallacious—which is another of the lessons we may learn by travel.

Very enjoyable evenings do we thus pass. We have some excellent vocal performers on board, and we sympathetically chant the regrettable fate of the unfortunate midshipmite, or join in the eulogy of one Nancy Lee—with a "Ho! ho! ho! and a Ho! ho! ho! Cheerily, lads, ho! ho!" (at this distance of time, the accuracy of these quotations cannot be guaranteed, but they were to this effect); and when the appearance of a perspiring steward entangled in a mass of bedding intended for the accommodation of a deck sleeper, warned the fair warblers that it was time to retire, what yarns we span sitting smoking in long chairs with, too often, a sparkling "peg" of whisky-and-soda close at hand!

Our usual coterie on these occasions consisted of the Colonel, a tall, spare veteran; the Bombay Barrister, clever, droll, and somewhat cynical;

the Superintendent of Police, an ardent sportsman, quiet and rather reserved; the District Engineer, a Cooper's Hill man, to whose cheeks colour was at last returning after a long spell in Europe, where he had been sent to shake off the results of a bad dose of malarial poisoning; the Junior Civilian, capable and self-possessed, but just now somewhat chastened by a furlough in England, and temporarily disturbed by haunting doubts as to his own infallibility; and, last of all, the Subaltern, a jolly, curly-headed, well-set-up boy of the stamp which Britain breeds—all eyes and ears for information regarding his new career. Talk ran on many topics, but, as is usually the case in such a collection of men, largely on camp life and sport. Quoth the Colonel, puffing at his cheroot and referring to some scraps of Indian news we had picked up from the homeward-bound papers which had come on board at Port Said, "I see there has been some serious dacoity (brigandage) in the Jhansi district,—a party of rich natives looted coming back from a marriage ceremony. Were you ever robbed out there, A.?" he adds, addressing the Engineer.

"Only once," is the reply; "it happened in this way. My wife and I were in camp near a biggish town, and we had been out to dinner and came back late. My wife was tired, and tied up all the jewellery she had been wearing, in her pocket-handkerchief, and put it under her pillow. Our dressing-bags were on tables in the tent, and

we generally kept money and valuables in them, as they always went with us in the cart during the march, and, as it turned out, it was pretty lucky she hadn't put her jewellery into hers. I woke up suddenly, hearing my wife cry out that there was somebody in the tent, but as such alarms were not infrequent and usually caused by a prowling village dog, I only muttered something until she again cried out that she could see the man. I nipped out of bed pretty quickly then—just in time to see the "purdah" (curtain) of the tent drop behind a retreating figure. I gave chase, but directly I got into the dark verandah between the inner and outer wall of the tent (for we were sleeping in a single-pole tent, which, as you know, is like one tent inside another), I felt a bundle of towels flung in my face, and before I could disentangle myself from these the thief was outside. I got out as fast as I could and gave the alarm—firing off my gun to rouse the camp. It was just the hour of blackest darkness before the dawn, and although we searched about we could see or find nothing. On returning to the tent, I found both our dressing bags, rather heavy ones, gone—which was a pretty clear proof that there were at least two men concerned in the robbery. As soon as the faint light of early dawn appeared, we recommenced our search, and presently discovered our bags in a field about two hundred yards away. They had difficult fastenings, and the thieves had

cut them both clean across the leather and ransacked the contents, but what with the hullabaloo and pursuit, this had been done very hastily, and as a matter of fact we lost nothing of any particular value. But when I examined the bags and saw that the tough English leather had been slashed right through with probably one of those heavy sharp knives that cobblers use, I was rather glad that I had not been able to lay hands on my armed friends! They got clean away."

"Couldn't they get a clue?" asks the Policeman.

"Well, burglaries had been very frequent in the station, and the police got on to a gang shortly afterwards which was on a sporting tour from a big city about fifty miles away, and as the robberies then all ceased, I'm inclined to think our crew belonged to it. Anyhow we thought we were well out of the business," concludes the Engineer, relighting his pipe.

"They are rather a sporting lot sometimes, these Indian thieves," says the Bombay Barrister, after a pause. "I remember hearing of a case where a high officer in the police was deputed to organise the arrangements for a large fair, and on his way there a train robber got into his railway carriage and stole all his money and the clothes he had taken off when he lay down to sleep. I can imagine the scene when the great official arrived at his destination and had to explain the reason of his defective wardrobe to

the group of subordinate officials who had respectfully met him on the railway platform!"

There is a general laugh, and then, "A brother officer of mine, that reminds me," says the Colonel, "was staying with a Judge, and one night the contents of one of his trunks were stolen, including all his medals. No trace of the thieves was discovered, but some time afterwards he received back his decorations by post, accompanied by a vernacular letter expressing regret at the inconvenience which had been caused him, and explaining that the thief employed for the job had blundered and taken the wrong sahib's things; the intention having been to punish the Judge for having given what the correspondent considered to be an unjust decision in some case. The letter was of course anonymous."

"A somewhat similar circumstance," oracularly remarks the Junior Civilian, "once occurred to me and a friend in my service. The Lt.-Governor was touring in my district, and we were summoned to meet him in camp and invited to dinner. Our servants had laid out our dress clothes on our beds, and having a short time to spare before joining the party, we strolled off together to smoke a cigarette. When we returned, our dress clothes had disappeared. It was an extremely annoying thing, for we were naturally anxious to avail ourselves of the honour of the invitation, which was, of course, now impossible, and I believe the incident caused some silly amusement

among the staff. It was generally considered that the theft was due to the enmity of some one whom we had annoyed in the discharge of our duties, and who had chosen this unfortunate form of revenge. He must have watched us as we strolled out of the tent and then slipped in and abstracted our clothes." ("Good old burglar," *sotto voce*, from the delighted Subaltern.)

"I've had no personal experience of camp robberies," says the Policeman presently, "and indeed they are not frequent in my part of the country, but I believe they are pretty bad on the North-West frontier, and I heard a gruesome story once from a man who was serving up there. A couple of subalterns (like you, Jim) were out on a shooting trip, and sleeping in a small bell-tent. The nights are bitterly cold up there in winter, and they had let their servants shelter for the night in a small village about half a mile from the camp. It was a notorious part of the country for thieves, so the subs. left the suspended lamp burning, and put their rifles under their beds when they turned in. Both were very tired and fell asleep immediately. About three o'clock, one of them woke and at once saw that the light was out. At the same time he heard a faint rustling among the straw under his bed, and cautiously putting down his hand to his rifle, felt it being slowly drawn away. Giving a shout to his companion, he leapt out of bed on the other side, and groped on the

ground in the dark. Something slippery and greasy glided through his hand, but presently there was a check, and he knew he had grasped an ankle at the joint. The thief was half-way out of the tent under the curtain, and it was soon obvious from the strain and the low muttering of voices outside, that his friends were doing their best to drag him away. But the other chap had groped his way to his chum's assistance, and the pair held on like grim death—shouting for all they were worth. And so the struggle went on for about a quarter of an hour — a regular case of pull devil, pull baker. Then to their relief they heard shouts in the distance and the sounds of rapidly approaching footsteps, and suddenly they both fell over backwards, still holding on to the ankle. All resistance had ceased, and the murmur of low voices had stopped. When the servants, who had run up to the camp on hearing the shouts, arrived, they relit the lamp and all went outside the tent to explore, and there they found the corpse of the intruder with his face so slashed with an Afghan knife as to be unrecognisable, and his throat cut from ear to ear."

The Subaltern's eyes are round with excitement. "I don't follow that," he exclaims. "Why did they cut the poor devil's throat?"

The Policeman shrugs his shoulders. "They say, you know, that the police up there have a queer lot to deal with and have their own methods.

Perhaps the gang thought that if their comrade fell into the hands of the authorities and was identified, he might have been induced to give them all away. However, this occurred a long while ago, and before the force was reformed," he added, smiling.

"Just so," remarks the Bombay Barrister dryly. "Horrible," says the Junior Civilian. "This takes the cake," says the gasping Subaltern. "I can't beat that," laughs the Colonel, rising. "I'm off to bed. Good-night all."

Aden—that hot dusty settlement of which the only advantage in being quartered there is that you steal ten days more leave when you go to Europe — and then the quiet dreamy passage across the Indian Ocean. Those were halcyon days, but all good things must have an end, and one bright hot morning we saw the spires and factory chimneys of Bombay rising apparently out of the sea. No magnificent Victoria Terminus, noble Government Secretariat buildings, or splendid Taj Mahal hotel, then graced the landscape. We had very few tourists, and no plague, National Congress, or "unrest." No kindly light had been shed by travelling politicians upon our Cimmerian darkness in those unregenerate days. Still, we did ourselves pretty well—the country was contented—and the rupee was worth one and nine-pence.



Our Shooting Elephants.

V.

CAMP LIFE AND SPORT.

No work on India, however modest, is complete without a reference to sport in that country, and happy the exile who brings a taste for this with him to his adopted home. Localities will, of course, differ in the quantity and character of the sport yielded, but it is very seldom in Upper India that a good day's shooting or pig-sticking cannot be obtained within a reasonable distance of a civil station or cantonment--and now and again an opportunity will occur of securing some of the larger and wilder denizens of the jungle.

Probably the Anglo-Indian who contemplates the advent of the hot weather with the greatest equanimity is the man who has arranged a tiger-shoot; for, when the increasing heat has dried up most of the ordinary sources of water-supply in the forest, he knows that "stripes" must go to quench his thirst to one of the few left, and that consequently he can be located fairly easily. Tigers can be got, as all know, in various ways. First, there is the drive (after the beast has been

marked down or has "killed"), with a long line of elephants; each with a sportsman and his rifle, in a howdah on his back. This is an exciting but expensive arrangement, for an elephant, as an American author remarks, is "a powerful heavy feeder," and his food will cost you at least a rupee a-day. Then a small army of beaters has to be paid; "mahouts," who guide the elephants, to be tipped; and a reward given for every bagged tiger to the head "shikari" (hunter or sportsman) and "mahout," which will keep them in affluence for several months. The strip of country to be driven is fenced in, as it were, as far as possible, by men in trees, who tap the trunks and boughs gently with sticks to keep the animals from breaking away at the sides; and at the end of the beat are stationed some sportsmen on their elephants, to whom the beasts are driven. These men, as a rule, have the best of the fun. The plan frequently adopted to determine as to who are to have these posts, is to draw from a small bundle of straws of different lengths; the one who draws the longest to have the first choice of place, then the second longest, and so on. The writer well remembers, as a youngster, drawing the longest straw, and promptly electing to be a "stop" to which the game was to be driven. But alas! among the guests of our host was a very "burra (important) sahib," who had only drawn a very short straw. To make a sad story short, at our host's request our positions were inter-

changed, and sure enough a fine tigress broke away in front of the favoured guest, who clean missed it! Well, there ought to be some privileges attached to the process of growing into a "burra sahib." The light-hearted subaltern seldom realises how willingly his senior officer would often change places with him!

A very likely place for a tiger in the hot weather is more or less dried-up swampy ground covered with the long grass known as "elephant grass," which often grows to a height of twelve feet or more. If the wind be moderate in strength, and in the right direction, this is set alight in the line taken by the advancing beat. All things flee before this wall of fire, which marches slowly on with a low roar, accompanied by a rattle of explosions of heated air between the joints of the long grass and bamboos, as loud as pistol shots. Overhead rolls a black cloud of smoke, in which wild-fowl and other birds, startled from their haunts in the pools, frequently get involved and fall suffocated to the ground.

Another plan is to tie up a young buffalo, and when the tiger has killed it, to sit up in a "machan" or platform constructed in a tree, over or near the "kill"; for the animal will very likely return to finish the carcase next night—he will probably not come after this. Many tigers are got in this way, but for the sportsman who is also something of a naturalist, there is nothing more interesting than to watch at night over a

water-hole in the forest, when nearly all the rest are dried up, and round which the "pugs," or footmarks, of tigers (or panthers) have been noticed. You must get up with your rifle into your uncomfortable perch well before dusk. Behind you will sit your imperturbable and silent "shikari," and you will only know he is there by gentle nudges at intervals as his quick, well-trained ear detects sounds of approaching creatures quite inaudible to yourself. There is something very eerie about a forest when wild nature settles itself more or less to rest. The "cicadæ" or tree-crickets (to whom our cuckoo-spit insect is first cousin) are noisy with their whirring sounds —caused by an internal organ, and altogether out of proportion to their size; birds have ceased singing, but are wrangling about choice of roosting places; fruit-eating bats are sailing over on their way to rob some distant orchards; an owl groans mournfully in a tree near by; night-jars commence their monotonous cries; fire-flies gleam at intervals; curious weird sounds come from the parched earth as the temperature falls, like furniture-creaks in the night; little local gusts of wind disturb the trees here and there; jackals come out and presently will wake the jungles with diabolical yells; and a distant hyæna may add his strange unearthly cry. The darkness comes on quickly, for there is little twilight in the East; stillness creeps over all, and sounds grow less and less. Your eyes are glued to the water-hole in

front and below you. A little group of belated sand-grouse suddenly alight on the edge of the pool and proceed to drink; a chattering noise, and half a dozen brown monkeys crowd down to the water; a stately peacock scuttles down the bank with a hurried mincing gait, like a lady running while she gathers up her skirts;—the pool is quite lively now, and the congregation is increased by the arrival of an old sow and her sounder of little pigs. Then like a spectre, and as noiselessly, a stag "cheetul" (*Axis maculatus*) delicately walks to the brink from the forest. It is a lovely shot, and your right arm instinctively moves but is instantly checked by the touch of Buddhoo, the "shikari's," hand. The moon has just risen, and although the ground in the shadow of the thick trees is in darkness, the pool and its margins are bathed in a soft and uncertain light. It is an interesting scene, and so much so that the primary object of the expedition is temporarily almost forgotten.

Perhaps some two or three hours pass. You think hard to keep yourself awake; of the prospects of promotion and the extreme toughness of senior officers; of the iniquity of making bachelors subscribe for widows' pensions; of that beastly bill for saddlery; of that sweet young thing who rejected you and married your friend (you never know your luck); of the dear old place and folk at home; of the possibility of getting leave; of the chances of the regiment in the polo

tournament, &c., &c.—while old Buddhoo, though apparently in a state of complete mental abstraction, is very likely thinking of the price of grain, and how to get level with his wife's cousin about that little patch of land he did him out of in some recent litigation.

All at once, at some distance, is a low sound something like a cough, and a stick snaps; off go any creatures still gathered at the pool, and Buddhoo's finger is pressed into your ribs. Perhaps ten minutes elapse—the beast is no doubt crouching and looking cautiously at the water from his cover,—when suddenly the tiger is standing over it straight in front of you! His near approach was absolutely noiseless. The light where he stands is bad, and his head at this distance is a small object. Steady—the rifle is poised, and what seems several hours elapse. Your luck, however, is good, and he half turns to listen to some sound behind him; showing his broad striped side. In a second you have drawn a bead with the night sight on a spot just behind his shoulder and fired,—a roar—a yellow flash—and he is gone. You turn with shame and grief to your "shikari." But Buddhoo's face is transfigured—"Lagga, zarur lagga" (he is hit, he is certainly hit), he says. Together you descend from the "machan" and cautiously reach the spot where the tiger had stood. Yes, there is blood—a nice pool of blood—and Buddhoo, who has again resumed the expression of a graven image, repeats

"Lagga, khub lagga, zarur milega" (hit, hard hit, we shall certainly get him).

And you probably do so, but the cover is thick, and a mortally wounded tiger at the point of death can crack a man's skull with a stroke of his mighty paw, so you wait till morning, and then procure a small herd of those unsightly and amphibious brutes, the Indian buffaloes, and drive them slowly through the jungle; for in a band they have little fear of a tiger, and he rarely attempts to attack them. In a short time you see them bunch up together, and you know that your quarry is near. Your party forms line with cocked rifles, and presently you find him lying stone dead. You then proceed to measure him—take care that the natives do not steal or burn the whiskers, for they have great properties, and if you singe them yourself you are not likely to be haunted by the creature's ghost!

This is a red-letter-day incident. It may happen as described, but the tiger may not come; and you may miss it if it does. A good skin is a fine trophy to possess. The writer once knew a man who had killed two full-grown tigers right and left from a "machan"; so he had the skins cured, and presented them to a young lady to whom he was paying his addresses. Two days later he proposed — was rejected — and she kept the skins! He related the incident some years after, and it was noticed that his regrets were mostly for the latter. It is not given to every man to shoot two

tigers right and left, and it would have been nice to have been able to casually point them out on your floor when you related the incident!

If an old Anglo-Indian gets on tiger stories, he does not usually stop until the last shred of his character for veracity is gone for ever. But at even this risk one may be told, because it did not happen to the writer, and Colonel ——, a distinguished officer of the old type in a non-regulation province, related the tale, and his word was unimpeachable. In some parts of India they drive towards a low screen of bushes on the ground, behind which the sportsman and his "shikari" crouch. Colonel —— was behind such a "putwa," as it is called, and the beat, starting about a mile away, had just begun, and in the far distance the sound of tom-toms, the beating of empty kerosene tins, and weird howls, could be faintly heard. It was a blazing hot day, and the "putwa" was close to a small "nullah" or ravine, in which a little water still remained. The "shikari" was athirst (natives drink an extraordinary amount of fluid) and asked permission to go to the "nullah" for a moment; promising to return immediately. The request was granted, but he had hardly left before an increased noise was heard, amid which the words "bagh, bagh" (tiger, tiger) could be recognised, and the Colonel peered out through the bushes straight in front of him with his rifle ready. Just then he heard a sound behind him which he thought was caused

by the "shikari" returning, but all his interest was in front, so he never turned his head but merely signified with his hand behind him that the man should crouch down. The beat came nearer and nearer, but except a "sambhur" stag (*Rusa Aristoteles*, probably so called as one of the beasts sent home by Alexander to his old tutor Aristotle), and a few spotted deer (the tiger's favourite dish), no beast of any size appeared, and when the men came up there were numerous inquiries regarding the quarry which had been aroused and driven that way — blank surprise following the sportsman's statement that he had seen nothing of it. Looking round, he perceived the "shikari" with his hands up in supplication, and his gaze fixed on the ground, where, some twenty or thirty feet behind the "putwa" and crossing diagonally from the "nullah" below, were the fresh "pugs" of a large tiger. The "shikari," while drinking, had heard the cry of "bagh," and fearing to disturb the approach of the beast, had remained crouched in the ravine and had only just returned. What the Colonel had heard was the tiger itself, which, following the bed of the "nullah," had sighted or winded the "shikari," and had stolen across behind the "putwa" as described.

In the mind of the old Indian sportsman this story will excite very little surprise. The most savage beast rarely attacks unless cornered or wounded, and, indeed, if an animal is shot at when

going away, and even struck, it will not, as a rule, come back to retaliate—though there are exceptions to this. The black Himalayan bear is especially to be treated carefully in this respect, and in the hills many lives have been lost by the amateur sportsman firing at a beast when above him, for in such a case he will almost certainly charge, though had he been below when shot at, he would probably have continued his course downwards; although instances are not unknown of his charging uphill. The author well remembers the body of a poor young subaltern being brought in after being found at the foot of a precipice. The fall had killed him, but the cruel marks on his face showed where the devilish claws had struck him and pushed him over the cliff to his fate. The bear was never found.

A traveller in the hills is sure to come across natives hideously disfigured by the teeth and claws of these animals. Captain A. J. R. Glasfurd, in his delightful book, 'Rifle and Romance in the Jungle,' also speaks of the ferocity and aggressiveness of the bear (*Ursus labiatus*) in the Central Provinces, and his views entirely coincide with those of the present writer and other sportsmen with whom he has discussed the subject. "Bhaloo," as he says, is a vegetarian, and his noisy foolish manners and clumsy gait excite amusement, but he is a dangerous brute, and the native never feels for him the tolerant and

even friendly sentiments often thrown over the tiger who keeps to moderate cattle-killing.

Accidents in big-game shooting must sometimes occur even with the most experienced and careful sportsmen, but they are frequently due to rank carelessness or ignorance. The writer remembers once in his earlier days being in a drive with a police officer and a subaltern in a British regiment. A bear and her cub passed through some thick jungle in front of the latter, who fired; and an examination of the spot showed a good deal of blood and a small fragment of bone. Despite the objections of the head native "shikari," the trail was followed up, and very easily, for there was plenty of "sign"; but presently the jungle got thicker and thicker, so that we were at last compelled to crouch and push our way through the thorny bushes and scrub vegetation to follow the wounded beast. Dusk set in, and to the author's relief, the police officer, an experienced man, flatly refused to go any farther. Some difficulty ensued with the excited subaltern, but we both held to our decision. That night the police officer had an attack of heat apoplexy, which necessitated our abandoning our expedition and getting him back to a settlement. The native "skikari" and his men followed up the trail with buffaloes next morning, and found, not the bear, but her cub, lying dead about half a mile from where we had given up the pursuit. Had we come upon her under the circumstances, entangled

as we were in the brushwood, and in the dusk, there is little doubt but that the infuriated and unwounded mother would have settled accounts with one or other of us. It was, of course, a foolish thing to do, and indeed following up a wounded beast on foot is always attended with considerable risk; though some men make it a point of honour to do so, for fear of the animal, if not killed, wreaking its vengeance on innocent and unprotected natives in the vicinity.

It is very wonderful how the largest beasts can conceal themselves and evade any but skilled trackers, and the present writer once stalked "cheetul" (spotted deer) in a small forest in the Tarai for several days and saw nothing except "pugs" or footprints, though a few days later a party driving with a long line of elephants put up and killed five tigers in this very tract. Of course this only refers to the ordinary sportsman. To the wild tribes, such as the Bheels and Gonds and other gentlemen of ancient lineage in Central India, the jungle is an open book, and it is a revelation to stalk "sambhur" or "cheetul" with one of them. You start in the grey of very early dawn with him, and when "sign" is found, he follows the trail like a retriever on a strong scent. There are few things more interesting than such an expedition with a good man—the trouble is to see the quarry sufficiently clearly in the thick jungle when he brings you up to him.

Apropos of the way in which big beasts can

conceal themselves, here is the story of the accidental shooting of a tiger; also given on unimpeachable authority. The relator was beating a long island covered with very high grass, with a party of sportsmen on about a dozen elephants. They worked over the ground once without result, and on retracing their steps over the same area, amused themselves with firing at "para" or hog deer, and a herd of "nylghai," as the hope of finding a tiger had been abandoned. Next morning some villagers brought in the fresh body of a tiger, killed by an Express rifle shot or shell, which they had found on the island. Now the party had camped quite close to the scene of the previous day's sport, and certainly no sound of a shot had been heard by any one of them in the night. They could only come to the conclusion that one of the shots (they were using Express shells) fired at the hog-deer or nylghai, had accidentally struck a crouching tiger which had allowed the beat to pass over him.

When a man takes to killing tigers he is as bad as a tiger when he takes to killing men. An old civilian friend of the present writer had killed no less than 137. He was, truth to tell, a selfish sportsman, and greatly resented any one else shooting when he visited his favourite haunts. On one occasion on arrival he found a planter on the spot, and the latter soon discovered that his supplies failed to come in, beaters to be unprocurable, and in other ways saw his hopes of bagging

a tiger doomed to failure. An angry written remonstrance was met with silence. The great man's beat was organised, and in due course he sat in his "machan" to await the driven game. But while waiting, he became aware of two sets of noises—one in front and one to the right. His "shikari" was unable to offer any explanation, and presently, to his surprise and violent anger, a mob of strange beaters, blowing horns and banging tom-toms, marched across in front of him and *at right angles to his own beat!* Marshalling these unwelcome forces, composed of his own employés, marched the disappointed planter, enjoying his novel and somewhat irregular revenge. Of course all the game, big and small, were swept away well out of range to the left of the big man's "machan." A considerable correspondence followed the incident, and no little amusement was created. Some held it to be unsportsmanlike, others—mostly unofficials—sympathised with the planter.

Although tigers in many localities are probably as numerous as ever, it is not so easy to-day for the obscure individual to get a chance of killing one. District officials, it is whispered, are expected to purvey them when required; and Indian princes, after their prolonged absences from their states, unselfishly spent acquiring that knowledge of Western customs and institutions so invaluable for their subjects, feel called upon to show pampered beasts to their English hosts when the latter

visit their country. Sometimes these hospitable gentlemen are hard put to it to provide the travelling "sahib" with the sport his heart yearns for. There are perhaps no tigers in the vicinity, yet the guest would fain have a tale to tell when he returns to the security of the smoking-room in England. It will never do to inform him that his hopes are futile, so (the rumour runs) a wizened old "shikari" is sent for and instructions issued, the result of which is that the old man may be seen next morning wending his way along tracks in the jungle, slapping the ground here and there where it is clear or soft, with a dry stuffed tiger's foot, so as to leave impressions in the soil obvious enough to the most uneducated eye. In the evening, the sportman is gratified with the intelligence that the tracks of a fine large tiger have been found, but that, as the beast cannot be exactly located, the best plan will be to stalk it with the aid of a "shikari" and so bring it to bag. The suggestion is received with greater satisfaction than it would be by a more experienced Nimrod, and next morning, in the grey of dawn, the "sahib" sallies forth armed with his brand-new rifle and accompanied by his guide. It is not very long before the "pugs" are found, and then the trail is followed with extreme caution and in what the sportsman regards as absolute silence, but which would probably suffice to start any big game within a quarter of a mile from the spot. The excite-

ment never flags—every few yards are unmistakable signs—devious and difficult tracks are trodden and retrodden—the panting sportsman is sometimes pressed to the ground and made to understand by excited gestures to be silent and alert—and occasionally with subdued and intense caution his attention is directed to a moving bough or twig, while the "shikari" stops and listens with rapt interest for a few minutes before proceeding on the dangerous expedition. Thus hours pass and many miles are traversed. The sportsman's nerves are in a state of extreme tension; perspiration starts from every pore; his clothes are in rags, and his legs and arms streaming with blood from the passage through the thorny brakes; until at last the hunters reach a small stream or river where the venerable impostor clasps his hands, and with bended head confesses that the trail is lost! The amateur tiger-slayer, not altogether regretting the termination of an adventure in which he feels that for several hours he has carried his life in his hands, returns to his host with some assumption of regret and annoyance—and for the rest of his life is in a position to conscientiously curdle the blood of his hearers as he relates his experiences over the home fireside.

But if tiger shooting is now difficult to obtain, there are plenty of other forms of sport left. Of these, pig-sticking must take first place. The race up to the pig, the taking of the spear and the probable charge of the infuriated animal, and

the genial gatherings in the camp at night when "the old grey boar" is celebrated in song, all linger as pleasant memories in the writer's mind. In many places, of course, pig cannot be ridden, and here shooting them is permissible. On one occasion the author, when stalking in a Tarai forest, nearly had an awkward accident with an old boar. It was getting late in the afternoon, and a heavy storm was approaching. An orderly, Bhowan Singh, and a villager to show the tracks, completed the party, and we were making our way as fast as possible out of the jungle to the open country where our horses were waiting, so as to reach camp before night fell or the storm broke. As we crossed a small opening in the forest, an animal of some size was noticed in the dusk lying at the foot of a large cotton-tree, and at this the writer, perhaps unwisely, fired with a single ·450 Express rifle which he had in his hand. Bhowan Singh was behind him with a double-barrelled smooth-bore loaded with solid bullets. At the shot, the animal jumped to its feet with a loud grunt and disclosed the form of a very large boar, glanced round, and immediately charged down at a tremendous pace and straight as an arrow. Had the orderly bolted, matters would have been serious, but he was a staunch and well-tried ally, and handed over the smooth-bore with perfect coolness. A heavy bullet between the eyes at a distance of three or four yards settled the boar, which rolled over and over with the impetus of

the charge, so that the writer had to jump out of the way. The first shot in the semi-darkness had just scratched the pig's side and merely served to anger him. Meanwhile the villager had disappeared, but after an interval again came upon the scene to our great relief, as the storm had now broken, the light had completely failed, and we could never have found our way out of the forest without his guidance. It was an unpleasant experience, for when we eventually reached the open country, the darkness was so black, the lightning and thunder so vivid and loud, and the wind so high, that the horses were unmanageable from fright, and we were reduced to bandaging their eyes with our handkerchiefs and leading them the best part of the way home. To add to our discomfort, on our arrival in camp after blundering about in the darkness and wet for several miles, we found the tents blown down, no dinner, and everything in confusion. However, after an hour or two the tempest cleared off, and we were able to repitch the tents and get something to eat. The boar was brought in next morning, and the tushes, the longest the writer has ever seen, now ornament the chimney-piece and serve as a memento of a somewhat chequered afternoon's sport!

"Nylghai" (*Portax tragocamelus*) and spotted deer are sometimes ridden with a spear, and the writer once *nearly* speared a wolf, but the animal, when apparently almost done, at last wore down his horse.

Then again in Upper India there is plenty of sport to be had shooting the black buck (*Antelope bezoarctica*), for which the use of a soft and expanding bullet is desirable, so that, in the very probable contingency of a miss, it may break up at once instead of skimming over the country and possibly finding its billet in the body of an old woman working in a high crop,—or the little "chinkara" or ravine deer, by some regarded as a gazelle, and so called on account of its habit of sneezing when alarmed (a good phonetic word)—or "nylghai" (blue cows) in the dhâk jungles, &c.

Various expedients, more or less unsportsmanlike, are adopted to get within range of deer and antelope—such as walking behind a country cart, wrapping oneself up in an old sheet to resemble a native cultivator, &c., but there is little use, as a rule, in trying to stalk them by means of cover. The chances are that a really wild animal is seldom approached by other than expert native "shikaris" without its knowledge, and often it is the best policy not to attempt concealment, but merely pretend to be unconcerned and to stalk it obliquely in a line well to one side of its situation; gradually edging towards the quarry while apparently intending to walk past it at some distance. The best chance is with a solitary buck — the does always give the first alarm. It is fatal to look in its direction, for an animal always seems to be watching a sportsman's head and eyes. The

author had a friend who was a great "shikari," and a fine well-set-up man, but extremely bald, and with a head the top of which was certainly a bright and shining place. He and a Goorkha orderly were once stalking ibex in Ladakh, and were crawling up a hill beyond which the herd was browsing. The sportsman had thrown off his sun-hat lest it should attract the attention of the game, and was reaching the crest of the hill to look over, when he felt something placed on his head, and taking it off, found it to be the greasy cap of the Goorkha. Now a hillman wears his cap for many years, and, flinging it down, he said in an angry whisper, "What the —— did you put that beastly thing on my head for?" to which the Goorkha, forgetting all his respect in the excitement of the sport, equally angrily replied, "Why? because only a fool tries to stalk ibex with a head like a looking-glass." The sportsman recognised the justice of the observation, and peace was at once restored.

Antelope are not so plentiful as they were. They are often netted, or driven into swampy ground in the rainy season by the villagers, and as their legs sink into the soft ground, they are overtaken and clubbed to death or shot. There is something to be said in extenuation of the cultivators' bloodthirstiness, for no doubt the very large herds of these animals take a heavy toll from the growing crops.

Then there are hares, much smaller than our

own, an occasional bustard or florican, sand grouse, pigeons, quails, &c. When the last come in to feed on the young "gram" (chick pea) in the fields, they are often very numerous, and bets are sometimes made by the sportsman that he will take out a hundred cartridges and bring back a hundred quails; and this he often does, for although of course he sometimes misses, the birds are so thick that he frequently gets two or three at one shot.

Wolves are not very common in India generally, and from their cunning and furtive habits are not often seen; but nevertheless in some localities they are a great pest. All villagers believe that the females sometimes carry off children and bring them up with their own cubs. Sleeman, in his Journal, quotes stories of such wolf-children in Oudh; and Kipling has utilised the belief in his charming Jungle Books, where Mowgli, so brought up, rises to be head of the wolf clan. Hyænas are mangy looking brutes hardly worth powder and shot, but will not infrequently be included in the bag in a jungle drive. They are bitter foes to the half-wild village dogs.

A good deal of fun can be had hunting the little Indian plains fox. They are too small to distance big running hounds, but are marvellously active; turning in their own length at full speed like a hare, and almost seeming to slip through the teeth of their pursuers. They are very common in Upper India, and few nights pass in

camp without their sharp little barks being heard. Their cry is not unpleasing, but the same cannot be said of that of the jackals which rend the air at night with their fiendish yells when hunting in packs for food. They afford good sport before dogs, and have the power of simulating death in a wonderful way. Once, when a big male jackal had been run into and apparently killed, the body was taken from the pack and thrown on the ground, where it fell limp and lifeless as a glove. About a quarter of an hour later, a cry was raised as the apparently dead animal cautiously lifted its head, got on its legs, and made off amid the furious barking of the dogs, now all tied up to the tent-pegs close by!

These animals are said to steal round villages at dusk, and by playing with unsophisticated young dogs, to lure them to a sufficient distance, where the pup's fate is speedily decided. They suffer from rabies and persons are occasionally bitten by them, but the great risk is the transmission by them of the disease to the village dogs which are in constant contact with human beings. A strange incident once occurred to the writer when camping in the jungles. The dogs, some of them big powerful hounds, were all tethered to tent-pegs in a circle one night, when suddenly a terrific barking arose, a great commotion ensued, and, lights being brought, a jackal was found in the centre of the circle nearly torn to pieces. It was feared that it was mad, for a sane jackal

would never have strayed in among the dogs, and its nose would have saved it even if it had been blind; but fortunately none of the pack ever developed the disease, and the matter remains a mystery.

Whether it be due to mere curiosity or, as Captain Glasfurd surmises, to a desire to probe the quality of a suspected danger, wild animals occasionally exhibit a want of caution which the present writer finds it difficult to explain except upon the former theory. Roused once at night in the jungles by a disturbance among the horses tethered under a tree, he looked out of the door of his tent and saw a leopard strolling about the camp like a dog. On another occasion, a herd of "nylghai" trotted through the encampment at midday; and at another time two wolves came and stared at him about a hundred yards off while he was indulging in a whisky-and-soda and a cheroot in a long arm-chair just outside his tent. On all these occasions the incidents occurred in out-of-the-way places, and the animals were looking about them with evident interest and curiosity.

In some parts of the country the wild dogs (Cyon), with dark-red coats and thick brushes tipped with black, are a great nuisance, and, hunting in packs, do more than anything else (not excepting the native "shikari") to drive the game away from any locality. Shoot them whenever you can—which will not be often.

Although good sport can sometimes be had near

stations, as the European settlements are called, for all-round shooting the best chance is when on tour in camp. Camping in India has been reduced to a fine art. When the cold weather has set in and the water and moisture left by the rains has dried up—say about the middle of November—the official whose work takes him afield gets out his tents and camp furniture, which have been repaired beforehand, inspects his string of camels (the Sanskrit gam-el or humped beast) which will carry them and his other impedimenta, sees to the nags and dogs and the old bamboo cart, cleans up his rifle and guns, dons his most comfortable and disreputable clothes, and starts away on his tour; with probably most of his servants along with him. He has two sets of tents—that is to say, as soon as he has smoked his last pipe and gone to his sleeping tent, the one in which he has spent the day, dined, and done his office work, as well as the kitchen tent and those occupied by the servants, will be all pulled down, placed on the camels, and taken on to the next halting-place—probably ten or twelve miles away. When he wakes in the early morning the camp of the previous day has disappeared, and there is only left the tent he has slept in, and another for the police guard and two or three servants. These will also be struck as soon as he quits the spot, and transported to the next halting-place; where all will be pitched by skilled men appointed solely for the purpose. At the end of his march he will

find his day and office tents all ready for his reception, and his welcome breakfast ready on the table.[1]

After the first start, all goes like clockwork, and he marches on day by day, halting now and again to rest his servants and animals, so that at the end of the cold season he will have traversed many hundreds of miles of country with a constant change of scenery, work, and sport. He will have learnt many things, and among others how little a healthy man really wants for even comfort, if he can dispense with effect. Every few days he reaches a small town, and at intervals he arrives at a headquarters station where he meets his fellow-countrymen and temporarily assumes the garb of civilisation. The postal arrangements are so managed that it is seldom he does not receive his letters and telegrams regularly. The Postal and Telegraph Departments in India are wonderfully well run. Over eight hundred millions of letters, newspapers, and packets pass through

[1] The tents in India are generally double—that is, there is an outer tent enclosing an inner one ; and this is better for rain, heat, and cold. They are probably the best in the world, and the writer, when reorganising the Burgher Camps in the South African War, found them superior for many purposes to those sent from England. The only trouble was the iron pegs at the top of the bamboo poles, for these attracted the lightning in the fierce storms so frequent in that country, and some were occasionally struck. In one such case the bamboo pole was so shivered by the electric fluid that it could have been tied in a knot. The difficulty was got over by placing empty soda-water bottles, as non-conductors, on the top of the iron pegs.

the post-office, and over twelve million telegrams over the wires, every year; and much other work connected with money remittances, parcel insurances, savings banks, and the sale of quinine, is also done. A letter will go safely over road, railway, ocean or river, for three thousand miles for a halfpenny, a post-card for a farthing, and a short telegraphic message for fourpence. Both departments are more than self-supporting, and few arrangements are more appreciated and utilised by all classes of Indians.

To the author's mind few existences could be more interesting than this nomadic life. The early morning ride or drive, varied by an occasional shot at a black buck; the stalking of wild geese feeding in the fields; the inspection of villages, and chats with the headmen; the run with the dogs after the furtive jackal returning from his night's prowl; the shooting obtained at small "jheels" or lakes, often crowded with wild-fowl; the bright but not fierce sun overhead, and the nipping cold breeze,—all combine to make life really worth living. And then the delight of the cool tub and the well-earned breakfast! The day passes quickly enough; there is the office work, more inspections in the evening, dinner, the final cheroot—perhaps smoked in the open air over a blazing log-fire, with one or two headmen of the village present to talk over matters they are interested in, or to relate tales and legends of the neighbourhood. How often when sitting at the fireside in England comes

back the memory of those nights in camp! A little clearing, with tall trees all round forming part of the dark and mysterious jungle—the white tents gleaming in the moonlight,—the camp-fire over which the sportsman sits wrapped in a thick coat (for it is very cold at night in winter in Upper India), smoking, reading, and thinking over work and sport. From the left among the trees, in the flickering light from many small fires where the men are cooking their food, come the cheery laugh and the sound of patting of unleavened cakes, as these are placed to be toasted in the iron plates over the little mud ovens constructed on the ground. A short distance off, in the semi-darkness among the trees, an occasional neigh indicates where the horses are bedded down, tied by the feet to tent-pegs driven into the soil; while from away to the right come the bubbling of camels, and perhaps the irritable trumpet of a tethered elephant. The moon shines down through the clear air—bats flutter overhead—little owls fly from tree to tree with noisy screeches — while one of a larger species keeps up a solemn and monotonous hooting from some dark shelter near by. Presently, with a swishing sound, a flock of wild-duck or teal sweeps at a terrific pace over the encampment; or a loud and noisy cackling, so close as to startle the listener, denotes the arrival of some wild geese, which linger awhile invisible in the air above the spot, wondering as to the meaning of the strange scene below. At intervals

the short sharp barks of the little foxes in the distance break the silence, and very likely suddenly a chorus of wild howls and shrieks like a burst of maniacal and derisive laughter, from a troop of jackals close up to the camp, rend the air—almost as savage and near as to suggest a sudden attack. A senior fiend usually opens the concert with a weird, long-drawn-out-howl, which is taken up by the whole pack in varying cadences. Jackals, though useful scavengers, are a great nuisance, but not half such pests as the half-wild village dogs, which steal round your tent in the dusk like shadows and loot your dinner from the table outside—just as it is about to be brought in by your enraged domestic! They think nothing of carrying off a leg of mutton or a sirloin of beef—things not easily replaced in the jungle.

People go to bed early in camp, and somewhere about half-past nine the chances are that the tired official is listening from among the blankets to the tap-tapping of the mallets on the pegs as the day tents are pulled down to go on to the next camp, until he falls, amid the protesting roars of the laden camels, into a well-earned and dreamless sleep. A free and healthy life unfettered by social obligations and restrictions—gone for the writer, alas! never to return.

There is very little game-preserving in India; comparatively few villagers hold licences to shoot; one is practically free to go where one likes; and the rural areas in the Upper Provinces are dotted

over with small groves of trees very pleasant to pitch one's tents under. The main thoroughfares are metalled and sound, but to obtain good sport and see and inspect the country properly, it is far better to use the rough village roads and tracks, and to wander with horse and dogs, rifle and gun, across its varied and interesting face. Let the reader picture a great expanse of flat or slightly undulating land, mapped out into fields of varying character and of no uniformity, being of all shapes and sizes and separated, where any real demarcation exists at all, by low embankments of earth. In some of these fields are growing young wheat and other cereals, maize, and the larger millets such as "bajra" and "juar," with their great heads of grain raised some six feet above the ground; while in others are the low crops such as the various pulses, chick pea, linseed with its blue flowers, the yellow mustard, the smaller millets, &c. Here and there will be a crop of the "arhur" (*Cajanus indicus*), a bushy leguminous plant with a woody stem, or perhaps again a patch of the tall thickly-growing sugar-cane; while interspersed among all the various crops will be areas temporarily bare-fallowed — for the Indian farmer does not grow roots as we do in England. Numerous groves of mango-trees offer their welcome shade — open plains are met with at intervals — here and there a group of palms denotes the position of a sheet of water shimmering in the sun—or the traveller may presently find

himself in a locality where the scanty vegetation and the presence of the calcareous conglomerate known as "kunkur," used for metalling the roads, indicates the vicinity of ravines running down to a river. The country roads—nothing more than deep-rutted tracks — wind about the diversified face of the land, connecting the little raised and wooded villages with one another at distances of a few miles.

Although the cattle are grazing on the plains, and the landscape is enlivened by the numerous spots of colour produced by the red and blue garments of the peasant women working in the fields and the bronze figures of the men as they guide the oxen in the plough or lift the water from the wells, still the wild animals and birds seem little affected by their presence, and the general impression is that they are very little interfered with,—which indeed is the case. Good caste Hindus generally are opposed to taking life, and with Muhammadans and lower castes of Hindus among the poorer classes, apart from the difficulty of getting licences, there is the question of the expense of weapons, powder, and shot; so that they confine their sporting efforts mostly to the slaughter of big edible victims such as antelopes or—in the case of very low-caste Hindus—the wild pig. If we except the water-fowl on the lakes and rivers, there is very little game visible when once the sun is fully up; the antelope and deer will be in the high crops or the sugar-cane brakes

from early morning until the evening; the hares and partridges are crouching in thorny bushes or other cover where they are secure from the swoop of the kites; the quail are in the high grass; the blue pigeons in the trees or in the cool depths of a disused well in the fields; and birds like the beautiful "hariyal" or green pigeon, with its delicate plumage of French grey and greenish-yellow, are concealed in such trees as the fig or banyan, with the foliage of which their colouring closely blends. It is only in the very early morning that one can fully realise how teeming with animal life the country really is.

This is the general aspect of the great fertile area known as the Doab—the land of the two rivers—lying between the Ganges and Jumna. Farther east, the vegetation becomes much more luxuriant, until, in the steamy climate of Bengal, vast fields of rice and groups of palm-trees are the most prominent features. To the north lie the extensive forests and jungles of the Tarai at the foot of the Himalayas; and to the west, the dusty but productive province of the Punjab with a climate presenting great extremes of heat and cold, reaching up to the river Indus. The whole of the country between this river on the west, and the Ganges and the Brahmapootra on the east, is practically one great fertile plain. It supports an immense population, and is the richest, most populous, and most historically famous part of India. The giant Himalayan range fences it in

on the north; while the Vindhya mountains bound it on the south, and divide it off from the great raised plateau of the Deccan and Southern India generally.

Many an enjoyable day is spent on the large pieces of water, often of many acres in extent, known as "jheels"; fringed with reeds and swamps, and in the deeper portions of which the lotus lily and other aquatic plants grow luxuriantly, and thickly enough to support the handsome "jacanas" (*Metopidius indicus*) running over their broad leaves, uttering plaintive cries, and making short flights at intervals with their long legs hanging down in an absurd fashion—and upon the open spaces of which immense quantities of wild-fowl rest and feed. Around the edges many specimens of the Gruidæ, or crane-tribe, stalk and gobble up unhappy frogs, &c. Cranes and storks (which the Muhammadans say do the pilgrimage to Mecca) are numerous in Upper India, and one often sees in the fields the large and beautiful Sarus crane (*Grus antigone*) with its red head and neck; nearly always with its mate, and frequently accompanied by the young birds of the last nesting season. It builds a large structure of weeds in shallow water, and covers up the two very pale bluish-green eggs with a few reddish spots, whenever it leaves the nest. It is not shot. Then there are the Common crane, or "kulang" (*Grus cinerea*), and the Demoiselle crane (*Anthropoides virgo*) — very wary birds, more commonly



Starting for a Shoot.

seen on plains or in the fields. The "kulang" are generally in large flocks and have a peculiar flight; circling round at a great height uttering rather pleasing cries, and their movements give the impression that they are about to alight, whereas the circles move farther and farther away, the birds still remaining at the same height in the air. They are not bad eating. Cranes, like geese and certain other birds, regularly post sentinels to warn the flock of danger; and in an old book in the writer's possession it is gravely stated that the bird on sentry duty (who is called the "Captain") stands on one leg with the other raised grasping a stone, so that, should he fall asleep, the latter falling will wake him up! Various egrets, herons, plovers, terns, &c., also frequent the margin of the "jheel," and sometimes one may see a long line of pelicans regularly quartering a shallow portion of the lake and swallowing up the small fish as they march along, to the disgust and annoyance of the local fishermen. Like a white island, well in the centre of the "jheel," is gathered a great collection (what old writers called a "gaggling") of wild geese; mostly greylags (*Anser cinereus*), or barred geese (*Anser indicus*). There is little hope of stalking these; they will rise at the first shot, and will all be off with much noise to some sandbank in the river, though it is sometimes possible to intercept them in their flight. The best time to get them is in the very early morning, when they are still in

the fields—for they are night feeders—and especially in crops of young "gram" (*Cicer arietinum*). A good plan is to get as near as possible to them by stalking, and as soon as the sentry sounds the warning "honk," to throw off all disguise and run straight at them. The astonished birds will often turn and stare for a few seconds at this unexpected form of attack and then take wing, but being heavy birds they cannot rise from the ground very quickly, and with fair luck the sportsman can often get in a right and left of B.B. shot with excellent effect. The writer remembers hearing the story of a sportsman dropping a goose into a river and then paddling after it in a canoe to retrieve it. When almost upon the wounded bird fluttering on the surface, a huge black slimy head rose suddenly above the water; there was a vision of a little green eye, two rows of jagged teeth, a stench of fetid breath, and the goose was gone! No time was lost in returning to the shore. It was a "mugger," the snub-nosed crocodile (*Crocodilus palustris*). Many rivers are full of these brutes, and also the "gavial" or fish-eating species. The former often carry off women, and even men, at the bathing-places, and although the latter are said to feed wholly on fish, still they are suspect, for bangles and ornaments are sometimes found in their stomachs. Both species are common objects on the banks of the rivers, looking like great logs of wood on the sand, sometimes twenty feet in length. They are true crocodiles—there are no

alligators in India—the lower canine teeth of the former fitting into a notch on the upper jaw instead of into a pit, as in the case of the latter. The "mugger" first buries its prey in the mud before devouring it, like a dog does a bone.

Crocodiles are sometimes found at considerable distances from rivers; either from being left behind when these return to their proper channels after being in flood, or because these great saurians will travel long distances on land when the ground is thoroughly wet. On one occasion the writer with two brother officers had ridden on a shooting-trip some twenty miles under a hot sun, and arriving at their destination, rejoiced at the sight of a small but clean pool on the edge of the forest. Nothing could have been more delightfully tempting, and we promptly tethered our horses and commenced stripping before jumping in. Now it happened that a dog belonging to the party, which had been unable to keep up with the horses, arrived at this juncture and ran down to the water barking with pleasure. At the sound, a great black head appeared on the surface, and a crocodile made a dash at the animal. Garments were reassumed. The nearest river was some sixteen miles away from this pool.

There is something sinister about an Indian river in the plains. It behaves well enough in the hot weather and in the winter, but when the rains fall and the immense body of muddy turbulent water takes its course to the sea, no one knows

exactly what will happen. The banks disappear, and the flood spreads perhaps over miles of country on either side of the bed. In 1879 a traveller on the Oudh and Rohilkhand railway line, between Bareilly and Lucknow, looked over a sheet of water seeming to stretch to the Himalayas, many miles to the north. Village sites were converted into little islands; for since when a mud hut tumbles down the new structure is built on the fallen *débris*, the effect in process of time is that these sites become considerably raised above the surrounding country. To these elevated spots of dry earth all animals fled for safety; and the locality swarmed with snakes, many of a venomous kind, which also infested the railway embankment and clung to the branches of trees standing in the water. Boats rescuing the people who had escaped into such refuges had to be careful how they approached them. A little village must have presented a strange sight; where wild and timid animals crowded close to their natural enemies—losing their innate fear of man in the presence of a greater danger. An awful epidemic of malarial fever followed these floods.

Then, large rivers, especially the Ganges and Indus, are always changing their courses, as if with malignant purpose; one year deserting a city, to the great injury of the inhabitants and the despair of the engineers controlling the supply of drinking-water to the people, and in another

suddenly becoming directed upon a centre of population, cutting into the banks and bringing down rows of houses, temples, &c., in ruins into the stream. Again, there is something uncanny in the nature of the inhabitants—porpoises, crocodiles, strange fish and crustacea, great water tortoises (generally miscalled "turtles"), &c. Woe betide the wretched animal caught in a quicksand on their banks; it is torn to pieces while still alive — especially by the hideous tortoises, snapping out great pieces of flesh with their chisel-edged beaks. Add to this the frequent spectacle of corpses floating down the stream, for the bodies of children and fakirs, if not buried, are always thrown into the river; and where cremation is carried out, the process is often imperfect and consists of little more than singeing the remains. The Indian crows (*Corvus culminatus* and *Corvus splendens*) always mark the position of these gruesome objects—sitting on the shoulders and carefully avoiding making a hole in the chest, as this would result in the letting in of water into the cavity and the consequent sinking of the thing. Muhammadans, as is of course well known, bury their dead, — placing the deceased in a sitting posture in the grave to respectfully receive the recording angels Munker and Nakir, and building a platform of masonry, planks or sticks, above the body, to support the superincumbent earth when the grave is filled in. This platform usually decays and collapses after a time, so that the

position of such a grave is marked by a depression in the ground; but in some cases they dig the grave, and then scoop out a little alcove to one side to receive the corpse; planking this up before filling in the excavation itself. This plan is far better from a public health point of view, but it is not generally adopted. In some parts of the country a repulsive practice formerly prevailed among the Hindus, of burying the bodies of persons who had died of cholera, smallpox, and other infectious diseases, for about a year, and then exhuming them for cremation; but this has now to a great extent been stopped.

To return, however, to a pleasanter subject and one more suitable to a chapter on sport. The most usual ducks met with on the "jheels" are the Shoveller (*Spatula clypeata*), not much good for eating; the Mallard (*Anas boschas*), not very common; the Spotted-bill (*Anas pœcilo-rhynca*); the Gadwall (*Chaulelasmus streperus*); the Pintail (*Dafila acuta*); the Widgeon (*Mareca Penelope*); the Common and Blue-winged or Gargeney Teals (*Querquedula crecca* and *circia*); the Pochards (*Branta rufina* and *Aythya ferina*), terrible birds to retrieve on account of their diving powers; the Whistling Teal (*Dendrocygna awsuree*); the White-eyed Duck (*Aythia nyroca*), &c. Round the edges of the water in the reeds will be found the little Goose Teal (*Nettapus coromandelianus*), which nests in holes in trees; and an occasional bittern, the favourite quarry of

hawking parties in old days, which Jerdon says is good to eat, though the author has never tried it. That it was esteemed a delicacy in olden times we know, for among the good things provided when the king "kept estate" at Yule-tide, we read, were "great swans, shoulders of wild boar with the brawn leeched (*sic*), barnacles, *bitterns*, cranes, and other wild-fowl." Dabchicks paddle about; while in some localities the Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*) may be seen diving in the deep water. The last is hard to bag, since the head and neck are very small and he seems to dive at the flash of the gun. If fishermen have stake-nets in the water, he is sometimes driven into them. Although they are not shot, mention should be made of the Brahminy Ducks, the Ruddy Sheldrakes (*Casarca rutila*), as some pairs of these are sure to be in the vicinity. The Indians call them "Chukwa, Chukwee," and have a legend that two lovers, for some indiscretion, were transformed into these birds, and that they are condemned to pass the night apart from each other on opposite sides of the river, and that all night long, each in its turn asks its mate if it shall come across, but the question is always met with the negative, "Chukwa, shall I come? No, Chukwee. Chukwee, shall I come? No, Chukwa." It is related that when Shah Jehan built that "poem in marble" the Taj Mahal at Agra in memory of his deceased wife, it was his intention to have also built a tomb for himself, and on consulting his

chief architect the latter suggested that this should be opposite the Empress's mausoleum, on the other bank of the Jumna. But the Emperor, enraged, dismissed the suggestion with the remark, "Am I a Chukwa, that I should remain on the other side of the river?"

When the young sportsman comes for the first time to the banks of one of these "jheels" and sees the great concourse of birds upon it, visions of immense bags rise before him. But although sometimes such dreams are realised, they more often are not, for in the first place he will probably not get close enough for a shot into the mass, and if he does, the whole community splits up at the first report of his weapon, and are not likely to be approached within gun-shot again. Very few Anglo-Indian sportsmen are pot-hunters, or use punt guns, and native "shikaris" trust mostly to nets for the capture of the birds. The usual plan is to obtain two "dug-outs" (trees roughly hollowed out) and then to lash a native string bedstead across them; as singly they are too crank, and the sportsman will probably find himself sooner or later in the water. You sit on this bedstead and, if you are wise, a well-filled luncheon-basket will be there too. Two native boatmen will be perched on the stern, squatting on their heels in an attitude seldom acquired by Europeans, and will pole or paddle the strange craft where it is desired to go. Working round the edges of the reeds on the margin of the

"jheel" offers the best chance of sport, as duck and teal rise out of these in little bunches and often afford good shooting; but for a really large piece of water, there should be several sportsmen afloat, and if these be distributed all over the lake, the birds are kept constantly on the move and, getting flurried, fly now and again within range.

At the first shot fired, there is usually a great noise as the wild-fowl rise, and the water on which they have been sitting appears to be whipped into foam. This, however, is generally not due to the rising of the ducks, or only partially so, and the effect is mostly produced by the flight of the ungainly Bald Coots (*Fulica atra*), of which there are pretty sure to be great numbers paddling about in a funny jerking manner among the wild-fowl. These birds seldom fly high or far, and are so cumbersome that they only get on the wing by beating the surface of the water several times with their feet before they rise properly into the air. They are useless for eating, though some often get shot accidentally among the duck and your "shikaris" and grooms will be very glad to have them, as their tastes in such matters are by no means fastidious. The Purple Coot, which rejoices in the name of *Porphyrio poliocephalus*, is a handsome bird and sometimes met with.

Once the duck and teal are on the wing, they will probably travel up and down the "jheel" in small parties, or sometimes singly, and then is the opportunity for making a bag; but each time you

shoot they will probably get higher and higher, and will presently fade out of sight as they abandon the spot for some other less disturbed piece of water in the neighbourhood. Still, before this happens, with fair luck and skill, you should have many times heard the welcome "whack" as a bird crumples up and falls splash into the water.

The pace at which duck and teal can travel when really alarmed is astounding. It is said that the wild duck is the quickest bird that flies, but, size for size, the teal is probably the faster of the two. You have to allow a good deal for these birds coming across you — or, for the matter of that, in all cases—and probably for one missed by firing too much in front, half a dozen are missed by firing behind them. Very pretty shooting can be had "flighting" just before dusk when the birds come in to feed during the night. It does not last long, but while it does, excellent sport (and often a "go of fever") can be obtained.

It wants some skill to obtain a really good bag on these "jheels," very many birds getting away wounded. The Brahminy Kite (*Haliastur indus*) is pretty sure to put in an appearance on these occasions, as he knows very well about these wounded birds, and will swoop down upon them and carry them off from their hiding-places in the reeds in which, from his vantage-ground in the air, he can readily see them. His Hindu name is Garuda, and in pre-Kaliyuga days he acted as a steed for Vishnu, and also—strange combination—

did his washing for him. His cousin (*Milvus Govinda*, or Pariah Kite) also sometimes joins the sportsman and shares his bag with him to the latter's disgust. It is a curious sight to see these birds swoop at duck and teal on the water: up go all the tails, and the contemplated prey disappears below in a moment!

The pleasure of game-shooting in England is very largely marred by the fact that so many birds get away to die a lingering and painful death. Winged birds have probably also received shot in the body, get weaker and pine away, and are sure in any case to sooner or later fall a prey to a prowling fox or a stoat or weasel; inasmuch as the unhappy creature is unable to leave the ground or roost in a tree. A distressing number of rabbits just crawl into their burrows to die. Now in India, where the balance of nature is very little disturbed, one feels far less compunction, since there is very little prospect of lingering agony for the wounded animal or bird; though, as Ernest Thompson Seton says, every wild creature's death is a tragedy. It is probably never a matter of more than a few hours before the cripple receives the *coup-de-grâce* at the jaws or beak of a predatory foe. This is doubtless as it was ordained. Under natural conditions there is no place in life's race for the defective, but the extinction is rendered swift, and probably nearly painless, under the paralysing effect of sudden fear. Men who have escaped from the jaws and

clutches of big carnivorous beasts, even with extensive injuries, tell us that the grip was rather numbing than painful. Of course there is the reaction later on—dangerous enough. The writer has known a beater seized by a tiger, get up, and, beyond a few scratches, appear uninjured—and yet presently die from simple shock.

Almost always there will be a corner of the "jheel" where the swampy nature of the ground tempts the snipe to rest and feed. Good bags can often be made, but the wading in cold water with the hot sun on the head is dangerous work, as numerous sportsmen have learnt to their cost, and many a serious attack of fever or dysentery may be traced to this cause; assisted perhaps by an infected Anopheles mosquito. One can never be quite sure where snipe will be. One year a place will swarm with them, and next year there will be none; and indeed the same place in the same season will vary immensely—probably due to the rise and fall of the water covering or uncovering some favourite form of food. Of course there are some places, as the old bed of a river, and swampy ground probably fed by springs, where they are always to be found.

Perhaps in connection with what is said above, a few words may be mentioned here as to maintaining health in India. The most important thing is moderation in both eating and drinking; and in one just as much as in the other. Indeed, in these days, probably more men eat too much than drink

too much. Plenty of exercise should be taken; cases of sunstroke are really uncommon in India, if proper precautions are observed. A little food should always be taken before going out after rising, and over-exertion and long rides in the early morning in the hot weather are to be avoided. Flannel should always be worn. Doubtless the improved standard of health in the tropics is largely due to wiser habits and greater temperance, but very great importance, in the writer's opinion, is to be attached to the modern plan of substituting woollen garments for the old-fashioned starched white drill and similar materials. Next to cholera and malarial fever, probably the greatest risk to health arises from "chill." What the exact process is, is hard to define, but every experienced Anglo-Indian knows the danger of sudden suppression of perspiration, and the vital depression which follows it. Congestion of the internal organs, especially the liver, is readily set up, and this is never to be neglected in the East.

Medical Boards examine candidates for service in India, and reject all those who are physically unfit. But it has always appeared to the author, that what we want principally to know is just what, at present, no such examination can positively tell us. We want to know whether the candidate is constitutionally immune, or unusually predisposed, to the diseases of the climate. Take, for instance, that great curse of the country—malaria. Some persons go through the whole of

their service practically without an attack of "fever," while others are constantly suffering from it. The physique of the individual seems to have little to do with the matter. And so it is with cholera and certain other diseases. In time, no doubt, we shall learn how these people differ in their intimate constitutions and shall pass or reject them accordingly, but at present only actual experience would seem to show whether the candidate will "stand" India or not.

Possibly presently we may come to employ as a diagnostic method what is known as humano-sero-therapy; a new and attractive science, but not, in our present state of knowledge, apparently, without some conceivable disadvantages. A correspondent in a medical journal jestingly writes that he can quite clearly imagine that fifty years hence one of his descendants might have some such tale as this to tell: "In 1921 I caught measles; my doctor, who had foreseen what was about to happen and had had himself innoculated a few weeks earlier, injected me with 25 c.cm. of his own serum, and within a fortnight I was cured; but in 1922 a strange thing happened. We were both attacked by typhoid fever at the same time. The serum of a hospital nurse who was convalescent from the disease saved our lives, however, and we recovered after an illness lasting about sixty days. Now we are all three suffering from chronic rheumatism, and are looking out for some person who has been cured of that disorder to try and catch a fourth

disease less serious than rheumatism, but so far have not been able to find one."

Improved sanitation, purer water and better food, and greater facilities for taking leave, have immensely improved the prospects of health for Europeans in our great dependency. Nowadays, yellow wrecks and millionaires are equally uncommon among retired Anglo-Indians — both their livers and their purses are lighter than of yore. But what used to be called zymotic diseases are still terribly prevalent; and death strikes very swiftly in the East.

Elsewhere the writer has commented on the apparently increasing distaste of officials for touring in their districts, and indeed to an individual whose education has been confined within the four corners of a typical school curriculum, and who is also no sportsman, the monotony of the life must often be very irksome. The enjoyments of existence in camp (and indeed of life generally) are much enhanced by the possession of some acquaintance with natural history and botany; and it is surprising that in a country so teeming with objects of interest, this knowledge should be so scanty and the property of so few. Happily, however, the majority of men have a zest for sport and the companionship of nature. The response to "the call of the wild" is probably due to a primitive instinct capable of being more or less eradicated by culture (with a big C); still we all obey it more or less, and for many it has an overwhelming fascination. Shake-

speare (several times convicted, as we prefer to believe, of deer-stealing in Sir Thomas Lucy's woods) knew the feeling well :—

"Now, my co-mates and brothers in exile,
Hath not old custom made this life more sweet
Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods
More free from peril than the envious court?
Here feel we but the penalty of Adam,
The seasons' difference, as the icy fang
And churlish chiding of the winter's wind,
Which, when it bites and blows upon my body,
Even till I shrink with cold, I smile and say—
'This is no flattery: these are counsellors
That feelingly persuade me what I am.'
Sweet are the uses of adversity,
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head:
And this our life exempt from public haunt
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything."

VI.

A VILLAGE TRAGEDY.

Boodhoo, son of Puttoo, belonged to a caste of which the vicissitudes of occupation almost rivalled those of the needy crowd which accompanied William of Normandy to Britain. Originally swineherds, the decrease in the number of swine, and other causes, presently rendered this employment unremunerative and uncertain—when the members of the tribe quite naturally turned to the study and practice of petty larceny as a career. Discouraged in the pursuit of this by the authorities, some of the abler and more enlightened men adopted the safer, if less interesting, *rôle* of informer; but this innovation was soon found to be inconvenient to all parties, and a system was gradually evolved which has persisted to the present time. The caste divided itself into two parties—the robbers, and the protectors, of property. This division of labour, which otherwise might have led to friction, was rendered feasible and satisfactory by a tribal understanding. The less enterprising thieves took service as watchmen

—binding themselves to take no concern with the doing of their caste-fellows, so long as the latter abstained from abstracting the property of their employers, — and the agreement, which perhaps lacked in some of the elements of strict morality, was honourably observed, and may possibly be regarded as an improvement on the older system of setting a thief to catch a thief.

Boodhoo was of an unadventurous disposition, chiefly confining himself to manual labour, the consumption of food and tobacco, and the celebration of an occasional orgy ; and preferred the more regular mode of life. He accepted the creed and customs of his caste as a matter of course, and in fulness of time found himself the guardian of the public peace and property in his village, on a stipend of five shillings a month, a suit of blue jean, and his "pickings." Moderate as this remuneration must be regarded, even allowing a certain latitude as to the value of the last-named source of income, perhaps the size and importance of his charge hardly justified the bestowal of a higher salary. The hamlet consisted of but some twenty or thirty mud huts with thatched roofs and little courtyards, clustered together on a slightly elevated site under a group of tall umbrageous trees, such as the "neem," "mohwa," "tamarind," &c. The somewhat larger dwelling of the headman, and the Hindu shrine in charge of the attendant priest under the sacred fig-tree, were the only structures of the least pretension.

An excavation full of dirty water from which the cattle drank, and from the sides of which the residents took the earth required to repair their modest tenements, was situated on the outskirts of the settlement; while in the centre of the inhabited area stood the large tree surrounded by a platform of earth, upon which the elders of the village sat and smoked and discussed matters of extremely local and particular interest.

As is the case usually in rural India, the little community was a separate unit complete in itself —members of the different castes, such as watermen, carpenters, potters, weavers, scavengers, &c., supplying the scanty wants of the inhabitants, and receiving their recompense partly in cash and partly in kind. There was only one shop, that of the grain-seller, who also combined with this business the sale of tobacco, salt, sugar, spices and condiments, and who was, moreover, the banker and money-lender of the place. From him advances were usually procurable for the cost of seed, labour, &c., upon the security of the anticipated crop; and considering the uncertain nature of this, the interest demanded was probably not more excessive than that charged by gentlemen in the West, whose taste in stationery is so admirable, and from whose benevolent operations apparently only minors are excluded. The villagers were all poor men, but many of them owned little plots of land upon which they grew tobacco, vegetables, chillies, &c., for their own use—working also for

the larger landlords in the vicinity in their spare time. Two or three miles away was a larger village where a weekly fair was held, and where the few necessary articles not procurable locally could usually be obtained.

In this Oriental microcosm, under conditions almost primeval in character, was Boodhoo's lot cast. Like Topsy, he "growed"; struggling to man's estate in satisfied ignorance of requirements which he had never been called upon to envy the possession of in others, and sprawling through early life in a state of nature with other bantlings similarly situated, and equally happy in the enjoyment of the society of cattle, vagrant dogs, sacred monkeys, and comparatively elevated older members of his own race. He had of course taken to himself a wife and, equally naturally, had a considerable family. Undisturbed by the wars of nations, the strife of factions, the pursuit of such fantastic studies as those of science, literature, and art, he led a thriftless simple life with much contentment. Births and deaths occurred in his family—grain was sometimes dear—the police officials were too often officious and rude—the money-lender grasping and troublesome—but there were many compensations. No one bothered him much; his wife, Maiki, if homely in appearance and shrill in tongue, was nevertheless industrious and careful about his home, his children, and his food. Probably his greatest trials were when he was summoned to give evidence in cases in the

"magistrate sahibs'" court. On these occasions he exhibited no indications of possessing any form of intelligence, and regularly received with great humility, indifference and relief, his summary dismissal from the witness-box as a fool. His ordinary duties were not arduous. As darkness set in, he armed himself with a long iron-shod pole and promenaded the village all night—emitting at intervals weird shrieks and howls to deter marauders from nefarious attempts upon the goods and persons of the inhabitants. His clerical functions consisted in the retention of two sticks; upon one of which he cut nicks to represent the births, and upon the other to represent the deaths, which occurred in the community. The Government required him also to give the dates of these incidents and the causes of death, but in the absence of any form of education or the faintest glimmering of medical knowledge, the information furnished by him to the authorities on these points, when he visited the police station, was not illuminating, and was necessarily lacking in variety and accuracy. His most usual diagnosis was "fever" in different parts of the body—occasionally relieved by certain higher flights of fancy such as "refused mother's milk," "body dried up," &c.

Upon the whole, however, as has been said, Boodhoo and his wife lived a simple, degraded, and contented life, sharing with his neighbours a regrettable tendency to obscurantism; until an incident befell which had far-reaching con-

sequences. Jeewan, Maiki's brother, lived in a village a few miles off, and close to a spot where the European artillery went for practice. It had happened on a recent occasion, soon after the battery had gone away, that Jeewan had picked up a shell which had failed to explode, and being of an uninquiring nature, had placed it on a fire with a view to melting it and applying the metal to other purposes. Presently there was no Jeewan. He was childless; but what was to be done for his young widow? She came from some distance off, and had only her uncle and aunt alive. A letter to them met with no reply, and when Boodhoo himself went to their village, he found that these relatives had disappeared suddenly on a date which corresponded closely with the one upon which his letter would have been received by them, and had left no information whatever as to their new address. So there was nothing for it but to bring Seeta, the widow, to live with Maiki and her husband.

At first all went well. Seeta was young, pretty, bright and active. Maiki found it a great comfort to be able to ventilate her views upon the conduct and doings of her neighbours before a ready listener — Boodhoo being indifferent and unsympathetic upon such subjects. The daily grinding of the corn was much more easily performed; work generally was made lighter; and it was Seeta who hauled out the youngest but four child when he fell into the village pond and was

nearly drowned. Boodhoo found his meals made much more palatable through the aid of certain combinations of condiments and spices which she knew of, for Jeewan, though unexacting about most matters, had apparently been particular about his food. Her husband's behaviour caused Maiki no uneasiness, for he accepted his sister-in-law's presence as he did a bumper harvest, a famine, a domestic incident, or the reflections of the authorities on his conduct of his duties ; and life went on very peacefully and uneventfully for some months. But one day he brought home a pocket looking-glass in a cheap tin case for Seeta — which Maiki appropriated without comment. Then he one evening thrust a dirty packet of sweetmeats at her behind his wife's back. The action was undetected, but presently Seeta was seen wearing a white-metal bangle, and Maiki received the information of its accidental discovery on the road with a sniff indicative of incredulity. That night she slapped the girl's face, and Boodhoo, looking up from his "hookah" or country pipe, threw a heavy piece of wood at her, and ordered her to stop. Seeta cried a good deal ; but he showed no further sign of interest and presently fell asleep. From thence on, matters went from bad to worse. The girl was constantly in tears, and one day he gave his wife a good thrashing. He had several times done it before, but on this occasion she made no sound ; and he wondered in a vague way about her silence at the

time. However, after this incident a distinct improvement occurred, and Maiki's manner became cheerful and even affectionate towards her brother's widow. Boodhoo put it down to the salutary effect of the correction he had administered.

In his official capacity as village watchman, it was necessary for him to visit at stated intervals the police station some twenty miles away, to make his report and exhibit his valuable records; and he set out on one of these expeditions a short time after the events described. The start was unpropitious, for a jackal ran across his path as he left his hut and nothing but Government orders would have induced him to pursue his journey under the circumstances. But absence meant a fine; and the pleas of his sudden and severe illness, or the totally unexpected death of a near relative, had been urged too often to make it probable that it would be accepted at headquarters; so amid the wailings of his household he set forth. It was September, and the weather being comparatively cool, he made the journey by day, sleeping that night, by permission, in the verandah of the police station. On the following morning he underwent the ordeal of the inspection of his returns, and having received his customary allowance of reprimand and abuse, was at liberty to return to his village, and consequently wended his way back that night in company with some of his friends who lived in hamlets on the route. The sun was up when he saw the little clump of tamarinds and

other trees beneath which the peaceful village nestled, and he hurried his steps to reach his home, influenced by several considerations among which hunger was probably the most important. At this hour Maiki and Seeta should have been bustling about the place, sweeping the little space in front of the hut or performing other duties, and a sense of foreboding seized him when he saw no one moving, and the purdah, or curtain, in the doorway, tightly closed. Pushing his way into his dwelling, he was greeted by Maiki, who, starting up, gave a shriek and immediately threw herself prone on the ground. From her cries and lamentations he could learn little beyond the fact that something had happened to Seeta—"pearl among women," "heart of my heart," &c.—but from the villagers who had now gathered round attracted by the noise, he learnt the sad facts. On the previous night, it seemed, the girl had left the hut to fetch a little fuel from the heap near by; had called out and rushed back into the dwelling, pointed to her foot, and fainted. Maiki, looking at the spot indicated, had seen at once the marks of the fangs of a snake, and had rushed distracted across the fields in the moonlight to a neighbouring village where there was a small dispensary, and implored the "doctor baboo" to come at once. Apparently this official was in no great haste, and when they together reached the hut, poor little Seeta lay dead and cold. She had been bitten no doubt, the "doctor baboo" said, by

a "kala samp" or cobra. All this was related submissively, for is not every one's fate written on his forehead (or rather in the sutures of the skull), and is not the "kala samp" an object of worship and so not lightly to be offended? Then, in the morning, the constables had come, and the body had been removed by low-caste people on a bier to the dispensary for examination.

This was all. Boodhoo received the news in silence and dismissed his friends. He made no inquiries of Maiki—lying with dishevelled hair on the ground, and rending the air with her hysterical lamentations—but went out, washed at the well, cleaned his teeth with a small piece of wood, said his prayers, put on clean clothes, and walked to the little dead-house attached to the dispensary. Eight annas judiciously bestowed, procured him a glance at poor Seeta lying in her coarse shroud. He said nothing, nor offered to touch the corpse, but going quietly out, went to his work in the fields until the evening, when he returned to his hut. His wife, now a little calmer, had prepared his food, but he pushed it away, and after smoking in silence for an hour or so, lay down on his string bedstead and drew his blanket completely over his head and body. Then Maiki, cautiously lifting her eyes from where she crouched in a corner of the dwelling, saw the blanket heaving as it was not wont to heave, and, as she watched the movement, the hunted scared look left her face and was replaced by one of almost contented satisfaction.

Now at the headquarters station, some twenty miles away, there lived three Europeans: the Magistrate, the Superintendent of Police, and the Civil Surgeon. The first named occupied a bungalow by himself, but the police officer and the doctor lived in another together; and on the day following the incidents related, a long blue paper was brought to the latter from the police station. By the orders of Government, whenever a suspicious death occurs in a district in India, the body is sent in to the Civil Surgeon to be examined and reported upon by him as to the real cause of death; but it so happened that in this particular district, where roads were bad and few, such bodies were often received in the hot and rainy seasons too decomposed to allow of a satisfactory conclusion being arrived at, so that official orders had been issued that, where the death occurred far from headquarters, the examination was to be made by the nearest Government Indian doctor in charge of a dispensary—the practice being safe-guarded by instructions that this official, whose professional ability and absolute integrity were occasionally questionable, should submit a post-mortem report, but should keep the stomach and certain other viscera in spirits in bottles until the orders of the Civil Surgeon were issued as to their disposal. Landon the doctor, and Marshall the policeman, were sitting smoking when the paper arrived; which gave a somewhat sketchy description of the state of the various organs, and re-

corded the fact finally that Musammat Seeta of Muddunpore had died of "snake-bite." But Landon screwed up his lips when he read the entry "stomach contained partially digested food and some white, gritty substance," and he threw the document across to Marshall with the inquiry as to whether he knew anything about the case. The latter read it, whistled, and immediately sent an orderly to summon the Inspector who had received the police report. What they heard about Boodhoo's ménage confirmed a suspicion which had at once occurred to them both, and a mounted orderly was sent out to bring in the bottle with its gruesome contents; and on its receipt it was immediately sealed and forwarded to the Government Chemical Analyst.

In a few days his report arrived. The "gritty substance" was arsenic in quantity sufficient to poison several people; and Boodhoo and his wife were promptly arrested. The case was tried by the magistrate, and excited little interest. Boodhoo, with unexpected intelligence, refused the offer of the services of a half-starved native lawyer whose only apparent means of subsistence was by blackmailing Indian gentlemen through the medium of a vernacular newspaper to whose columns, for a small consideration, the scribe had access—and both he and his wife were undefended. He pleaded innocence with a demeanour which at once aroused grave suspicion as to his guilt, but

Maiki, looking down to the ground with her shawl drawn over her head, said, "I did it," and continued, "This man" (indicating her husband, but not looking in his direction) "knows nothing about it. He was away. Seeta had taken him from me, and I killed her. I put arsenic in her food,[1] and when she died I made the marks in her foot which the 'doctor baboo' saw, with a large thorn. My little son" (the shawl shook here) "died of snake-bite, and I knew how the marks looked. No one else had anything to do with it." Formal evidence was then given by the witnesses, and Maiki was committed to the Sessions where she received sentence of a long term of imprisonment, while undergoing which she died.

Boodhoo, after listening to some severe comments from the magistrate on his conduct, which being delivered in Hindustani he unfortunately failed to understand, was acquitted; and being set free, sat down under a tree in the vicinity of the court, cooked his food, smoked his "hookah," and presently wended his way back to his village. It is regrettable to have to add that he there received considerable sympathy in his misfortunes. But after some months he one day left the village with his children, without resigning his appointment, and is believed to have taken service as a labourer on a railway embankment then under

[1] Poisons were then much more easily purchased and procured than they are now.

construction in a distant part of the country. And so he too passes out of this story; which has the unusual merit of being true. When once one gets down to the bed-rock, human nature is very much the same in all races.

VII.

A RELIGIOUS FAIR.

FAR back in the Himalayas—in Himachul, land of the Eternal Snows and home of the Great Gods —there trickle from the feet of glaciers little rivulets which, coalescing, form larger streams, and these in their course southwards and downwards are fed by tributaries and become the Alekananda, Mandakini, and Bhagirathi. Increasing in volume and strength and tearing through defile and valley in their rapid descent, they presently unite and run on together as the mighty Ganges—sacred to millions of men as flowing from the foot of Vishnu "like the slender thread of a lotus flower." Debouching from the hills into the plains, she reaches the sacred centre of pilgrimage—Hardwar, the gateway of Hari or Vishnu—and is immediately seized upon by sacrilegious engineers, who steal away nearly all her substance to feed canals, and send her on, a sadly diminished stream, to recover herself, however, in size and power and with undiminished sanctity, until she joins the Jumna and the invisible river Sarasvati at Pryag (Allahabad),

and hurries on to wash the steps of the temples at holy Kashi (Benares) and to cleanse away the sins of countless worshippers on her hallowed course to the sea.

Hardwar, to visit which is the cherished desire of all good Hindus, is situated at the end of a long, elevated valley, the lovely district of the Dun, enclosed by an outer range of mountains, the Siwaliks, and the lower slopes of the Himalayas. Immediately behind the little settlement itself are low hills; while in front flows the deep and rapid river, sparkling and bright as it came from its distant source. The portion of the town which lies along the bank of this consists entirely of stone shrines and temples, the stately residences of great Hindu chiefs, and *dharmsalas*, or rest-houses, the headquarters of the various mendicant religious sects. About half-way along the river front is the bathing-place, the sacred pool called Hari-ki-pairi in reference to the origin of the stream from the foot of Vishnu. This is the goal of the pilgrims who come in their hundreds of thousands from all parts of India every year to be cleansed from sin and all impurities, and here it is that, when life is past, the Hindu would have his ashes left after being gathered from the funeral pyre. There is a subtle charm about the spot, quite apart from its religious associations, which appeals to the most Philistine mind: Nature smiles in her solemn grandeur — a fitting place for the worship of the Preserver.



A Bathing-ghât.

From the northern bank of the river stretches for many miles an unbroken forest of tall umbrageous trees to where the foothills, also heavily wooded, extend in long spurs into the plains, divided by deep valleys passing up into the Himalayas above, and forming the channels through which the mountain streams and torrents find their way to join the larger rivers below. The whole of this tract is but sparsely inhabited, for the climate for part of the year is deadly, and little agriculture is possible. Small clearings are met with here and there where the half-wild people raise their scanty crops, and across these are often stretched long ropes connected with bells which ring when pillaging animals visit the fields and come into contact with the entanglements. The great forests are full of game large and small, from the wild elephant, tiger, or bear, down to the little four-horned deer, the wild pig, and jungle-fowl. Boa-constrictors are occasionally seen, and the deadly and aggressive hamadryad (*Ophiophagus elaps*), which is an extremely rare snake in this part of India, has been shot here. The view from Hardwar looking north is, indeed, superb. In the foreground is the bright and rapid river; then come the dense and sombre forests, gradually coalescing and becoming continuous with the belt of tall conifers clothing the Himalayan slopes; while beyond the summits of the great hills above, rise the shining peaks of the Snowy Range.

About a mile below Hardwar is the picturesque little town of Kankhal—now, alas! sadly marred in its beauty by the erosive action of the river—where there are other large and imposing *dharmsalas;* and to the west again is Bhimgoda, a sacred shrine and pool, the washing in which should be included in the programme of all orthodox pilgrims—especially women.

The town itself, apart from its strangely beautiful situation and its long façade of stately buildings on the river bank, presents few objects of interest, and, with the exception of certain shrines and rest-houses, consists mostly of shops for the supply of food, cooking vessels, cloths, rosaries, &c., and of the lodging-houses for the accommodation of pilgrims. It possesses railway and police stations, a little hospital, and bungalows for district officials, canal engineers, and visitors. Of course, the great centre is the sacred pool. Formerly a dirty collection of water, more or less circulating in a recess scooped out of the bank by the action of the river, and approached by steep and narrow stone stairs upon which numbers of people were frequently crushed to death, it is now, by the assistance of Government, converted into a broad pool through which the pure water of the stream is led in a constantly changing current, to which access is obtained by a high broad flight of shallow stone steps, and from whence an exit has been formed by the construction of a wide paved platform along the bank between the river and the

houses. Standing near the centre of the water is a little stone shrine upon which the engineers have affixed a board marked with numerals to indicate the height of the river, and which is frequently made obeisance to by the simple villagers under the impression that it is one of the numerous objects of veneration with which the locality abounds. A light iron bridge thrown across the front of the pool, safeguards the bathers from being swept into mid-stream, and is utilised for controlling purposes by officials. The water swarms with great *mahseer*—the "Indian salmon," so called from its game characteristics, but really a hill carp, the *Barbus Tor*—which are regularly fed by the pilgrims to the spot. Custom has made them quite fearless, and they take absolutely no notice of the bathers; pushing their way through them with perfect equanimity. A handful of grain thrown into the water will bring them together in an almost solid mass, all tumbling over one another, and among them are many of huge size. At Muttra, another very sacred bathing-place, water tortoises (*Trionyx*) are similarly fed by devotees.

The little town is in a constant state of bustle. Crowds of monkeys infest the neighbourhood; sacred bulls wander about the thoroughfares; temple bells are constantly ringing; a steady flow of dripping bathers is hurrying along; faquirs squat under great mat umbrellas by the roadside; and various monstrosities, such as cows with super-

fluous legs hanging from their backs or necks, are exhibited by their owners for alms or gifts, in the streets and thoroughfares all round. On the outskirts are various minor but holy shrines; while scattered about the site itself, and notably in the vicinity of one temple and bathing-place, are little unpretending monuments in masonry. They bear no names and are all now of considerable age, for they were erected in past times in honour of widows who had performed *suttee.* The rite had not actually been carried out here, but the ashes of the victim had been brought and bestowed in the sacred river and the little structure raised to her memory. They are very numerous, and it is impossible to view them, with a recognition of their import, without reflecting upon the awful tragedies to which they bear silent witness. Rough slabs of stone, upon which a rude figure of a woman is depicted, are not infrequently to be seen in out-of-the-way parts of India, and these probably usually denote the actual sites where the immolations took place. The practice of *suttee* was abolished by Government in 1829. The Abbé Dubois, writing in 1816, has given us a graphic and distressing description of one of these gruesome ceremonies.

By day and night the pool itself is thronged with bathers, worshipping according to an established ritual; while the edges are crowded with the Brahman "pandas," who minister to their religious wants, impart information regarding births, deaths, marriages, descents, relationships, and other family

details, carefully recorded in quaint long books written in the vernacular; or carry out the ceremonies attendant on the dispersal of the ashes of those of the family who have died during the past year. If one looks through the clear water to the bottom of the pool, one may see there a snow-white deposit consisting of the calcined bones of generations of Hindus, which have been brought here in little cloth bags by the relatives—often from many hundreds of miles away.

All castes and conditions of Hindu men and women are here: the stately Brahman, absorbed and abstracted in the performance of his devotions; the lusty youths and their young wives, full of life and gaiety; the middle-aged matron with her children, shrieking half in fear and half in pleasure as they are plunged under the water; tottering old folk led by their relations; the local priest tendering assistance and soliciting alms and benefactions; faquirs and religious ascetics and mendicants, some in saffron robes and others literally in dust and ashes, some emaciated to an extraordinary degree and others remarkably fat and sleek; and certain unconcerned-looking individuals, with wicker plates in their hands, apparently scratching the bottom of the pool with their feet. These last are feeling with their toes, which use has made almost like fingers, for articles of jewellery, rupees, &c., which votaries have dropped into the pool as offerings to the gods, and which, when fished up, will be placed in the platters they hold

in their hands — a proceeding which, curiously enough, appears to excite no feeling of disapproval among the people. Here are the manly Sikhs and Jats with their splendid physique; the Hindu residents of the Punjab; the sturdy Rajput from Central India; the Mahrattas and inhabitants of the Deccan, whose forefathers collected *chouth* (one quarter of the revenue) with some rudeness from the ancestors of certain modern Indian politicians; the Hillmen; the portly and sleek Bengali; and the general population from the Upper Provinces, Rohilkhand and Oudh. They are all more or less worshippers of the Hindu Triad, the Trimurti—Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva: the Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer,—and you may know the followers of the second by the mark of a trident, and those of Shiva by the horizontal line, on their foreheads.

What are the tenets of the religion which has brought this vast concourse of people here to worship? Simple as the question seems, it is in reality very hard to answer. Hinduism is probably the most eclectic form of belief in the world. It has largely absorbed Animism, worsted Buddhism, and emerged almost unscathed from the attacks of fanatical Muhammadanism. The term Hindu includes the semi-savage of the jungles still partially clinging to the worship of nature-gods and forest deities, through various gradations up to the refined Vedantist of towns and cities. There have been great schisms, and there are

several to-day, but astute toleration is the watch-word of its leaders, and this explains its prominent position among the faiths of the land, and at the same time renders it so difficult to strictly define its essentials. But it may be permissible to make a few general observations on the subject.

When Brahma the Creator resolved to create the world, he assumed the visible form of Vishnu. At this time the whole earth was covered with water, on which Vishnu floated sleeping on a bed which rested on a serpent. From his body sprang a lotus, from which issued Brahma who created the great island continents. The god Vishnu is the type of all that is best in Hinduism, and his worshippers number amongst them most of those who strive to throw off all the impurities and ex-travagances which have crept into the faith. Shiva, the Mahadeo or God Omnipotent, is, as Mr Sherring in his 'Western Tibet' truly says, a grim god, with whose worship, and that of his consort Kali, is associated most of what is cruel, brutal, or obscene. Brahma has comparatively few votaries, for, having created the world and stocked it, he is considered to take little concern with the management of it; he is too remote and abstract an influence for popular worship. It is Vishnu who constantly reappears on earth—either in human or animal shape—interposing decisively at some great emergency. The belief in these Avatars, descents or reappearances of Vishnu, constitutes one of the most essential and effective

doctrines of Hinduism, and it is thus that most of the famous saints, heroes, and demigods of romance are recognised as having been the sensible manifestations of the Preserver. Shiva, or Siva, represents, as Sir Alfred Lyall says, the impression of endless and pitiless change. "He is the destroyer and rebuilder of various forms of life, he has charge of the whole circle of animated creation, the incessant round of birth and death in which all nature eternally revolves."

But whatever may be their particular religious predilections, all orthodox Hindus recognise certain books as of divine authority; especially the Vedas, the Institutes of Menu, and the Paranas. The first are of great antiquity, written in a very old form of Sanskrit, and deal with religion and philosophy. They are attributed to the inspired Vyasa and other *rishis* or patriarchal sages, "the mind-born sons of Brahma," and date from about 1500 B.C. The Vedas proper are four in number, of which the Rig-Veda is the most important, and bears internal evidence of being the original. It is the great fount from which is derived the knowledge of the old and most genuine forms of the institutions, religious and civil, of the Hindus, and is probably the oldest surviving record in the world. The doctrines inculcated in these books much resemble those taught in Babylon, what Humboldt found in Mexico, and what the Saxons brought to England. The five great cardinal duties enjoined to be performed daily are: study-

ing the Veda; making oblations to the Manes; to fire in honour of the deities; giving rice to human creatures; and receiving guests with honour. The principle of caste is insisted on in the later text-books, when Brahmanical influence became pronounced. The four original castes were: the Brahmans, who were not necessarily priests, though all priests must be Brahmans; sickness being the result of sin, they were necessarily the only physicians. The second was the Kshatriyas, or military caste. The third was the Vaisiyas, or merchant caste, which also practised husbandry. And last of all came the Sudras, stamped socially and morally as degraded beings; the penalty for killing a Sudra was the same as that for killing a dog; he never could be invested with the sacred cord and become a "twice-born" man.

Nowadays among the members of the lowest caste a good many gradations are recognised. Caste, indeed, generally has been much weakened by the greater extent and variety of occupations introduced of late years. Brahmans may be seen earning their livelihood in many ways (though retaining their privileges practically intact), and low-caste people have immensely benefited socially by the opening up of fresh fields of labour and enterprise. The day is possibly not far distant when the difficulty of obtaining men to carry on the most menial and lowest offices will become a very real and serious one.

Our knowledge of the Vedas is largely derived

from the "Institutes of Menu," reputed to have been compiled somewhere about the twelfth century before Christ. Menu, the reputed son or grandson of Brahma, to whom the latter made his revelation, is considered by many to correspond with Adam, and is claimed by Hindus as their patriarchal ruler and legislator, the primeval sage and progenitor of mankind. The sage Vrihaspeti says in his law tract: "Menu held the first rank among legislators because he had expressed in his code the whole sense of the Veda; that is, no code was approved which contradicted him; that the Shastras (annotations on sacred works) retain splendour only so long as Menu, who taught the way to just wealth, to virtue, and to final happiness, was not seen in competition with them."

Much change took place before the appearance of the Paranas, eighteen in number, the sacred books believed by many to have been written by the authors of the Vedas; but evidence seems to show that they were compiled at various and comparatively recent periods, and probably none are more than a thousand years old. They record the achievements of gods and heroes and repeat much of what is contained in the great epics, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. Space does not permit of a lengthy reference to these last-named works, but it is certain that some acquaintance with them is necessary to enable the dweller or traveller in India to understand the sentiments of the people towards their most popular deities.

The *Mahabharata* is the history of "the Great War" (*Maha Bharat*) between two branches of a reigning dynasty in the misty past which derived its lineage from the moon. The drama opens with the appearance of Pandu and Dhritarashtra, who are contending for the possession of Hastinapura, a territory to the north-east of Delhi, which still retains the ancient designation. The family of Pandu consists of five sons, Yudishthira, Bhima, and Arjuna by one wife, Pritha; and Nakula and Sahadeva by another, Madri. Dhritarashtra has a very numerous progeny, of whom Dungodhana is the eldest of a hundred sons. An important difference between the two families is that the wives of Pandu appear to have bestowed their favours upon certain of the great gods, so that their five sons are of superhuman origin. Thus Yudishthira was the son of Dharma, the god of justice; Bhima of Vayu, the god of wind; Arjun of Indra, the god of the firmament; while Nakula and Sahadeva were twin sons of the sun. These divinities are held to correspond with Pluto, Æolus, Jupiter, and the Dioscuri (Castor and Pollux) of Roman mythology.[1]

Pandu (the Pale), the elder of the two brothers, is suspected, on account of his pallor, of possessing the seeds of leprosy, which would incapacitate him from reigning, and, being voluntarily set aside, retires to a retreat in the Himalayas, where he dies. His companions then take the sons to their

[1] Nolan's 'British Empire in India.'

uncle, who receives them under his guardianship; but the action arouses the violent anger and hatred of his own sons, who endeavour to destroy their cousins by setting fire to the dwelling of Pritha and her three boys, who are all believed to have perished in the flames. Escaping, however, by a subterranean passage, they flee into the forests and assume the garb and mode of life of Brahmans. While in their retreat the sons hear of the unrivalled beauty and perfections of the daughter of Draupadi, king of the upper portion of the country between the Ganges and Jumna, who, at a ceremonial rite called Swayambara, is to select a husband from a congregation of suitors. The brothers, in a spirit of knight-errantry, repair to her father's court, win the fair prize, and then, their achievements and success being bruited over all the land, are sent for by Dhritarashtra their uncle, who makes them joint heirs to the sovereignty with his own sons.

We now see the young Pandava princes Yudishthira and his brethren ruling over a large tract of country of which the capital was Indraprasthra, and a part of the royal city of Delhi still bears this name. They carry their conquests far and wide, and presently Yudishthira in his pride resolves to celebrate the Raja Suja solemnity; a sacrifice where princes officiated in the most menial posts and made presents in acknowledgment of submission. In the course

of these celebrations, his cousins, who are present burning with rage and enmity, entrap him into what is probably the greatest gamble on record, for he loses his palace, wealth, kingdom, wife, brothers, and eventually himself. The game played appears to have been a sort of back-gammon which was called *pacheesi*, and is the origin of our word "chess." The aged monarch Dhritarashtra intervenes in his favour, but the fates are against the gambler, and presently we see him stripped of everything and compelled by stipulation to pass, together with his brethren, twelve years in the forests, and one year *incognito.* This bond they faithfully adhere to, and, the twelve years being over, they take service with King Virata, rise in the monarch's favour, and, having completed the thirteenth year, disclose their identity, secure his alliance, and obtain his aid to vindicate their rights of sovereignty.

War is declared against the cousins. At this point there appears upon the scene a deified hero, Krishna, a most picturesque character, who, as a relative of Dungodhana, offers him the choice of a large army or his personal services. Dungodhana unwisely selects the former, and Krishna, in himself a host, enlists under the banner of the Pandavas, and becomes the charioteer of his friend and favourite, Arjuna. To his great prowess and wisdom are principally due the victories of his brothers in arms. The glowing descriptions of the battles and the personal feats of valour

rival in vividness and variety the recitals of the 'Iliad.'

Yudishthira, having vanquished all his foes and surmounted all his difficulties, becomes the victim of regret and lament for the past, and having abdicated his kingdom, sets out with his attached brothers and mother for the nursery of his race—the holy mountain Meru in the Himalayas. On the journey, the avenger of former misdeeds visits the members of the little party and each in succession drops dead by the way, until when Indra comes to convey them to Swarga, his heaven, only Yudishthira and his faithful dog, who has followed him from his capital, are left. He declines to accept Indra's favour unless his dog be also admitted.

The poet follows the heroes into the realm of shades, but here we must leave them. It will strike the reader that almost every aspect of romantic fancy with which we are familiar, in classic legend and in recent times, is included in this wonderful and venerable epic. The theory of solar myths probably largely affords the explanation of this fact.

The 'Ramayana,' a still older poem, relates the deeds of Rama, whose identity has been established; the great conqueror and deliverer of the world from tyrants. His life was a mixture of ascetic devotion and active warfare, and his conquests extended even to Lanka, or Ceylon. The king of that island, a ten-headed giant called

Ravana, had stolen away Sita, Rama's wife, and the story of her rescue is narrated in every Hindu household. Rama was greatly assisted in his expedition by Hanuman, the monkey god; especially in effecting the crossing from the mainland by means of a bridge formed of great boulders dropped into the sea. When the bridge was ready, so the legend runs, all creatures were warned off it; but the little grey squirrel, as impudent apparently then as he is to-day, disobeyed the command and hid in a cleft among the stones, with the result that he was branded in three lines upon his back by the foot of the god as he passed over, and his posterity carry the marks to this day. Rama's end was unhappy; for having slain his brother Luchman, the companion of his dangers and triumphs, he committed suicide from remorse. He was deified, and he and his ally Hanuman are among the most prominent gods now worshipped in India.

The most serious rival and opponent to Brahmanic cosmogony and belief was Buddhism. This religion, founded by Sakya Muni, or Gautama Buddha, as contained in the Buddhist gospel, appears to have been a protest against the priestly tyranny, ritualism, and caste privileges inculcated in these religious works; for it bade each man be "a light to himself." For long the two creeds contested for supremacy; but eventually, somewhere about the twelfth century, Brahmanism triumphed and Buddhism was driven out. It is

still, however, the religion of Burmah and the northern Himalayan tracts.

The origin of the Sikh religion, again, was also a revolt against the tyranny of priesthood, ceremonial, and caste exclusiveness, and was fostered by oppression into a great warlike movement. Baba Nanuk, the first of the Gurus, or priestly leaders, was born in the Punjab in 1409. He was a gentle, tolerant teacher, who held that a man could obtain eternal happiness without forsaking his ordinary worldly duties. He taught that there was "but one Lord and One way," and for him there was "no Hindu and no Muhammadan." He refused to don the sacrificial thread of the former, saying to the Brahman priest, "Make mercy thy cotton, contentment thy thread, continence its knot, and truth its twist." The Sikh scriptures are contained in the sacred book known as the Granth Sahib. The fifth Guru in succession was Arjan, who was done to death by the Muhammadans. Much persecution of the sect was practised, and presently the enraged people rose, and under Guru Govind Singh bitterly avenged their woes. Caste was abolished, the word "Singh," or lion, adopted by all, so that no man was inferior to another; and all male adults were initiated as soldiers. Every Sikh was bound to carry steel in some form about his person, to wear blue clothes, allow the hair and beard to grow and never to clip or remove the hair from any part of his body, and was forbidden to smoke

tobacco. Thus arose the great nation of religious warriors, the army of the Khalsa—the "Ironsides of India." In 1780-1839, under Runjeet Singh, who revolted against the Afghan Amir and founded the Kingdom of the Punjab, they became an important power. They supply some of our best troops, and the Sikh regiments have glorious traditions of bravery and loyalty. Saraghari will live for ever in the records of the Indian Army.

Mr Max Arthur Macauliffe, in his work on the Sikh religion, tells us that Guru Teg Bahadur, who was executed by Aurungzeb in 1675 on the false charge of gazing in the direction of the Emperor's seraglio, replied to the charge: "Emperor Aurungzeb, I was on the top storey of my prison, but I was not looking at thy private apartments or at thy queens. I was looking in the direction of the Europeans who are coming from beyond the seas to tear down thy purdahs and destroy thine empire." It is said by a writer of the sect that those words became the battle-cry of the Sikhs in the assault on Delhi in 1857 under General John Nicholson. Guru Teg Bahadur's words were prophetic; for fourteen years after his death the English determined to acquire territorial possessions in India in order to resist the oppression of the Moguls and Mahrattas. To-day the Sikhs are a quiet, orderly race, but that the old martial spirit burns as fiercely as ever below the surface, has been shown in a hundred fights under

the British flag. They numbered 2,195,000 at the last census.

It is a curious and interesting scene, this bathing at Hardwar, and with the clear blue sky above, the bright, swift-flowing river in the foreground, and the majestic mountains towering behind and stretching to the snows beyond, one not likely to be readily forgotten.

Although pilgrims visit Hardwar all the year round, still there are certain great festivals and days when it is particularly expedient for the orthodox believer to be here and bathe. Sometimes astrologers and Brahman sages discover conjunctions of planets which should be marked by special religious observances, and thereby bring great and unexpected worry and anxiety on the officials responsible for the proper conduct of proceedings; but usually the great day falls about the second week in April, and is determined by the phases of the moon. According to Chaucer, this was the favourite time in past days for pilgrimages in England.

> "When that Aprille with his showres swoot
> The drought of Marche has piercèd to the root,
> And bathèd every veyn in suche licoúr,
> From which vertu engendered is the flour,
> When Zephirus eek with his swete breeth
> Enspirèd hath in every holte and heeth
> The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
> Hath in the Ram his half course runne,
> And smale fowles maken melodie,
> That slepen al the night with open eye,

So pricketh them nature in their coráges :—
Thenne longen folk to go on pilgrimages
And palmers for to seeken strange strandes,
To distant seintes, known in sondry landes."

Once in twelve years occurs the *Kumbh*, and the occasion is particularly propitious, and so in a lesser degree is the *Adh-Kumbh*, which occurs every six years. For such a gathering very special arrangements have to be made, for suddenly from all quarters of the land some five or six hundred thousand persons will gather together and concentrate upon one small spot — the sacred Hari-ki-pairi, the bathing-pool; especially as not only is the day, but approximately the hour, fixed, when it is most conducive to the soul's benefit to plunge into the water. Of course, all cannot bathe at the same moment; still, the rush at such a time is terrible, and it can easily be imagined what a risk attaches to the collection of these enormous and dissimilar concourses of men, women, and children —exhausted, excited, and mostly quite strange to the locality. The district officer, or his representative, has been days or weeks on the spot making arrangements; canal officers watch the river; engineers run up temporary pontoon bridges connecting the mainland with a long island opposite the pool, for this area will presently be black with people camping in little reed huts, and thronged with an immense crowd of the religious mendicants known as Bairagis. Then the police come in great force and erect barriers on the roads

leading to the bathing-place, so that the people may be marshalled in detachments to their goal and be thereby prevented from hustling and crushing each other with serious and even fatal consequences; and railway officers come down to watch and control the traffic, and arrange for the arrival and departure of the numerous and crowded special trains.

In past times the history of the great Hardwar fairs was, to use the words of one of the writer's predecessors, "a record of disease and death." Not only were accidents numerous and fatal, but the awful scourge of cholera was seldom absent; for this is the season of the year for its appearance, and when the disease was once introduced it spread like a conflagration. Then the frightened people fled to their homes, carrying the seeds and scattering disease all over the land, and leaving a long trail of corpses in their tracks. In 1879 it was estimated that not less than 20,000 persons perished in this way.

Many persons visiting Hardwar travel on into the hills to visit the shrines of Badrinath and Kedarnath, and when cholera breaks out at the fairs, there is an enormous risk of the disease being carried there. But in olden days the hill-man had his own system. To pass into Garhwal *en route* to the shrines, a rapid and deep river had to be crossed, and before the iron bridge was built, this could only be done by means of a rope bridge known as a *jhula*, or swing, which consists

of nothing more than stout ropes fixed to each bank; the two lower ones held together at short distances by pieces of bamboo tied to them, upon which the passenger walks, holding on to the two hand-ropes above. When the pilgrims arrived at the bank, they would discover that by an unfortunate accident the ropes had broken on the farther side of the river and the long bridge was trailing uselessly in the torrent!

As the chief sanitary authority with the Government, it has fallen to the lot of the writer of late years to organise and control the sanitary arrangements of many of these great gatherings. The staff was a large one, comprising medical subordinates, police patrols, and hundreds of "sweepers" (low-caste conservancy servants), supervised by European deputies and selected Indian assistants. The town and its surroundings were thoroughly cleaned up a few days before the fair; field hospitals, &c., were run up and staffed; the arrival of trains and of carts was watched for cases of infectious disease, which if found were promptly isolated; overcrowding in the lodging-houses was, as far as possible, prevented; and the whole site constantly patrolled to ensure cleanliness and to detect the appearance of disease in time to arrest its spread. They were periods of constant anxiety and strenuous action, but of intense interest, since an officer was brought into close and intimate contact with people and conditions seldom met with elsewhere.

A prominent feature of the large fairs at Hardwar, as in a lesser degree at Allahabad, Benares, Ajudhya, Gya, Puri, and certain other localities, is the great gathering of religious ascetics and mendicants known as *jogis*, *sanyasis*, *gosains*, *sadhus*, *faquirs*, &c.,—many of them attended by their *chelas*, or disciples. They are seen at ordinary times wandering alone, or in very small parties, all over the country; but perhaps it is not generally recognised that most of them are banded together in great brotherhoods, with definite leaders who control the collection and expenditure of considerable wealth belonging to the community, and who possess great personal influence and authority with their followers. The writer has known many of these leaders, or *mahunts*, long and fairly intimately, and has, as a rule, been struck with their intelligence and force of character. At Hardwar the clans are mostly those found in the Punjab, such as the "Nirbanis," "Nirmulas," "Udasis," &c. All these more important *akharas* (the word seems to be used to describe both the clans and their gathering-places) have definite headquarters in large *dharmsalas* and encampments, where they receive free rations and hold discussions. Bairagis appear to have little organisation.

Although to-day these religious ascetics and mendicants are of all castes, the custom of thus abandoning the world and living upon charity is of great antiquity in India, and, indeed, goes back

to those remote times when the Brahman Desert Philosophers, Vanaprasthas and Sanyasis, were held in such esteem and veneration that great Western leaders of thought and action did not disdain to seek them out and learn wisdom from them. Among these, indeed, were such men as Pythagoras, Lycurgus, and Alexander the Great. Ancient writers, Strabo, Megasthenes, Arrian, pupil of Epictetus, and others, speak of the "Brachmans" as a tribe or caste divided into two classes — "Brachmans" by descent, and "Germanians" by election. The latter were only elected after very careful examination, and the code of both was originally very high and pure. The three guiding principles were: reverence of the Divine Being; obedience to the laws and a hearty concern for the welfare of the society; and love of liberty and the obligations they were under to sacrifice their own particular happiness to the preserving of the form of government under which they lived in its full vigour, in order to preserve thereby the security and welfare of their posterity. They taught the doctrine of metempsychosis, imagining that in proportion as men heightened or depressed their animal faculties in this life, they should fare in the next; that is to say, such as gratified their passions passing into beasts, and such as cultivated the virtues of the mind rising by degrees through the several classes of mankind until in the end they merited an entire freedom from body, and were received into the company of

angels. Authors who speak of them as gymnosophists are but partially correct, for they only went naked when in seclusion; their public functions were always performed in robes. They usually confined themselves to one form of learning; thus one would be a philosopher, another would devote himself to the laws, &c. After spending thirty-seven years in the ministry they were allowed to quit it, and to live the remainder of their lives in towns, to eat the flesh of wild beasts, and to marry as many wives as they liked to perpetuate the race of Brachmans, though they were not to reveal any of the secrets of their philosophy to them, "because there was great reason to doubt whether they would be discreet enough to conceal what they were taught, and, secondly, there was no less doubt whether this accession of knowledge might not incline them to pride and disobedience." They enjoyed the support and respect of all, and when the inconveniences of old age began to weigh them down, they ordered a pile of wood to be erected, and then, dressed in their best garments and singing hymns, they laid themselves down on their faces and presently remained there still and quiet, without so much as a groan, until, fire being set to the pyre, they were consumed to ashes.

The Germanians, the second or elected class, were also known as *Gioghis* or *Jogis*. They appear to have been as good and wise as the Brachmans by descent, but they did not enjoy the same privileges as the latter, for they could never marry

or quit the order. A later writer, one Signor Pietro della Valle, "a noble Roman, a learned and candid writer, and whose travels are justly esteemed as accurate as were ever made into this part of the world," thus describes them in more recent times. "The *Gioghis*," he says, "are not Brachmans by Descent, but by Choice, as our religious orders are. They go naked; most of them with their bodies painted and smeared with different Colours; yet some of them are only naked with the rest of their bodies smooth and only their foreheads dyed with Sanders (*sic*) and some red, yellow, or white Colour, which is also imitated by many secular Persons out of superstition and gallantry. They live upon alms, despising Cloaths and all other worldly Things. They marry not, but make some Profession of Chastity, at least in Appearance, for in secret it is known that many of them commit as many Debaucheries as they can. They live in Society, under the Obedience of their Superiors, and wander about the World without having any settled Abode. Their Habitations are the Fields, the Streets, the Porches, the Courts of Temples and Groves, especially where an Idol is worshipped by them, and they undergo, with incredible patience, Day and Night, no less the Rigour of the Air than the excessive Heat of the Sun, which in these sultry countries is a thing sufficiently to be admired." This description would be very fairly accurate at the present time.

Many hold that the Brahmans to-day are the people most opposed to British rule in India; dreading that their position, still very great, is being undermined and may presently be destroyed. But they need have very little fear of this for a long time to come. Hindus, and especially Brahmans, have under all dynasties had a great deal to do with the government of the country and held the highest positions; though often under the supervision of the ruling power, as was the case with Todar Mul and others under Akbar. They are, of course, no longer solely priests, but the caste—and it is impossible to dissociate caste from Hinduism—is still universally regarded as a thing apart, and its members as something more than ordinary men. They are, as a rule, proud, and of a pessimistic temperament, as is fitting to any one living in the *Kali-yuga*—that direful age and era of decadence, when life is short, falsehood and deceit have replaced truth, and when the great gods no longer strive together in the land.

To bathe at the sacred pool, the several brotherhoods proceed in great processions, and if two such of different clans collide, there is trouble, and in past years such occurrences led to much bloodshed; so that now the magistrate confers with the leaders and appoints definite and separate times for each to march. It is a wonderful sight to stand on the light iron bridge already referred to at the pool, and to watch the approach of one of these processions. As soon as the barrier is raised in the

street above, they march on in thousands, in some sort of formation, with numerous rich and costly silk flags and banners flying, to the weird howls, blasts, and screeches of conches and long quaintly curved trumpets and horns, and the clattering of sticks together, until the broad and lofty steps are packed with devotees and fanatics—many stark-naked. In front and in the centre, in a palanquin richly canopied, are borne the objects of worship —a copy of the Granth, images of the gods, or balls of ashes—and on each side a lofty standard is raised. Arrived at the margin of the water, the palanquin is advanced into the pool and the standards slowly lowered in absolute silence. At this moment the most stoical observer cannot fail to feel a thrill of excitement. The instant they touch the water it is as if pandemonium had broken loose. With shouts and cries of religious import, the whole wild crowd rushes into the water, and the pool becomes a mass of frantically excited humanity. It is a strange, barbaric scene, and one cannot fail to recognise that here the veneer of civilisation is very thin. Introduce a few mangled corpses and eliminate the European staff, and it probably affords a very fair presentment of what a great bathing was five hundred years ago.

Presently horns and trumpets are sounded, and the first rush troops out of the pool and takes its way along the paved roadway leading to the bridge over the river; to be succeeded by crowd

after crowd until all have washed their sins away. And then the procession reforms, and, with strange sounds and waving of flags, and headed by the leaders on elephants, returns to its encampment.

The writer has often watched and pondered over these great gatherings of itinerant ascetics and religious mendicants—strange, wild personages, with hair (often false) coiled up high on their heads; curiously distorted sticks, long iron pincers, or black begging-bowls of *coco-de-mer*, in their hands; often covered with dust and ashes, and with no other raiment than a scanty waist-cloth. Here is a man reclining on a wooden frame full of large iron nails pointing upwards and passing into his flesh; here is another with uplifted arm shrunken from disuse to the size of a stick and anchylosed at the shoulder-joint; here is a faquir who has vowed never to sit or lie down for eleven years and who takes his sleep hanging on to a padded rope suspended from a tree. No doubt there are some unmitigated rascals; many others are rank impostors; but, still, the majority are probably more or less sincere. Often when talking to them the writer has been interrupted by a respectful correction (though the faquir never "salaams") couched in excellent English from a weird figure, more or less attired, who has thrown up a position of considerable emolument and respectability in furtherance of a religious vow. One such personage, with hardly anything on to cover his nakedness and with long hair hanging down

his back, was a friend of the writer's for years. He spoke and wrote excellent English, and was reported to have studied at a Scottish university. He was possessed of considerable wealth, nearly all of which he gave away in charity, and was a man of much influence, which he used to support the authorities at the time of the disturbances in connection with plague measures. He lived in a little encampment on the island opposite Hardwar, and had followers whom he considered to be possessed of strange psychological powers, and he was very fond, as many of these men are, of the works of Marie Corelli. His letters were very interesting and a correspondence was maintained for a long time, until he wrote that his environment was unsatisfactory as he could no longer hold converse with the same spirits as of old; so he went to Lhassa, but, returning once more to the Punjab, fell ill of plague and died. Whatever the character of these faquirs and ascetics may be, at all events the common people regard them as holy men, whom to offend is dangerous; and the writer has seen the women, when the horde of dripping bathers in the procession has passed along the paved embankment, rush in and gather up the water from the puddles they have caused, and carry it to their lips!

It is probably not very well known how many there are of these religious mendicants, but most likely there are tens of thousands in Upper India alone. They wander all over the land, moving

from place to place, invading the privacy of dwellings where few other people can find admittance, and they are the repositories of great secrets. There are comparatively few telegraph or telephone posts in the rural tracts of India, but what a marvellous agency for the circulation of news and propaganda such a community may, if organised, become! The system is simple. The word is passed to a man, "Tell this in secret to five true believers"; each of these passes it on to five more, and so on, so that information spreads in an ever-widening circle. These men claim to have abstracted themselves from all worldly things, among which, it is imagined, politics are included; still——

The writer is of opinion that it is most important that officials should keep in touch with the leaders of religious thought—and this is an elastic term. They very frequently will not be persons of much pretension, and the disreputable-looking figure sitting at the bathing-ghat, and receiving alms with apparent indifference and complete mental abstraction, may be a man of very great weight in the community. But the wise official knoweth these things, and attendeth thereto. We have had some emergencies in Upper India in recent times—plague, pestilence, famine, and "unrest"; and those called upon to deal with them have learnt many facts.

Nowadays the conditions of pilgrimage to the great bathing fairs have much altered. To begin

with, a great many people object to any form of control over their actions, and the effect is that, whereas probably just as many persons bathe at the sacred spots as formerly, the concourses at the great fairs themselves are somewhat smaller and the attendance is spread more regularly over the whole year. This, from a public health point of view, is an advantage. And considerable importance is to be attached to the greater ease and comfort with which pilgrims can now travel to and from such gatherings. Bacteriologists tell us that some animals, normally immune to certain pathogenic or disease germs, are rendered susceptible by being shaken up and otherwise frightened and disturbed. The writer holds the view, even as a sanitary officer, that in the greater comfort and security which pilgrims now enjoy lies the explanation of much of the immunity from epidemic disease which has mercifully attended these great bathings in late years.

When, after some days are past, the fair is over, the people return by rail, in carts, or on foot, to their homes, singing religious hymns and bearing most of them bottles of Ganges water enclosed in wicker-baskets and suspended at either end of bamboo poles swinging on their shoulders. The author has seen large quantities of this water, quite clean and pure, stored in metal vessels in the cellars of a Hindu prince in Southern India, and was assured that it had been there for years, for, it is averred, the contents of the holy river never

putrefy. And, indeed, such water, taken perhaps from a source at far-off Gangootri, probably contains little or no organic matter.

Fairs, such as the one it has been attempted to describe, occur all over India. They are primarily the occasion of religious observances; but they are a good deal more even than this. There is not a Hindu house or hut of which the inmates do not look forward with eager interest to joining in these gatherings. Children's ages are often reckoned from a *kumbh.* Here one combines an act of merit with excitement and pleasure — here the ashes of the cherished dead are bestowed as they would have wished — here the business is transacted with the semi-religious recorder of domestic incidents—here old friends are met, new sights seen, and all is excitement, bustle, and religious enthusiasm. There is no action which could be taken by Government which would produce the same dismay and resentment as their prohibition. The part of the State, as is well recognised, is not to interfere unduly, but merely to watch over and protect the people gathered here from injury, disease, and — incidentally—from one another.



Leaving Camp.

VIII.

A PAINFUL MEMORY.

I THINK it is Calverley who sings—

> "—the growing ages steal
> The memory of past wrongs from us,"

and certainly it is the case that when the old Anglo-Indian calls to mind the occasions and circumstances under which he has been victimised in India, the curious mixture of artifice and simplicity, astuteness and stupidity, exhibited by the wrong-doers in the course of the proceedings, he remembers introduced such a humorous element into most of such transactions that their recollection is fraught with no bitterness, but rather amusement. Indeed this attitude of mind is acquired long before one leaves the country. You find no difficulty somehow in welcoming the old "bearer" when he comes at intervals to pay his "salaams" after having retired to a comfortable hut and patch of land the purchase price of which you know perfectly well came out of your pockets, and during the gradual collection of which you have

for years expressed to him your candid conviction that he is a thief. Nor do you feel any excessive indignation when, being called upon, at the request of the prisoner, to vouch for the honesty and good character of your "khidmutgar," or table-servant (arrested for some frolic in the bazaar), you find him in the hands of the local police—and wearing one of your best shirts! Rather, if you are a righteous man, you merely rejoice that you never summarily dismissed the washerman to whose villany, according to the captive, its disappearance when you missed it had been clearly attributable. I wonder sometimes whether the governor who, after enforcing the most rigorous and elaborate restrictions against the entry of tobacco into his jail, found that he had unwittingly conveyed the leaves himself every morning between the saddle and the back of his horse, when he rode into the courtyard of the building and dismounted and proceeded on his round—was more amused or angry with the cunning groom who had devised the expedient! I am inclined to think the former, for I am conscious myself of having entertained a sneaking affection for many a crafty and engaging rascal—and perhaps my kindliest recollection of all is for one Antonio da Silva. I suspect some friends will recognise the story!

In certain wild and sparsely-populated areas in India, there run unexpected little single-tracked narrow-gauge railways, which serve many useful purposes; such as not only the conveyance of

travellers from place to place, but also, and more particularly, the bringing of forest and jungle produce to a market; while at the same time discharging the more remote but equally important function of enabling a military force to be rapidly concentrated at any particular spot where its presence is desirable. And apart from these definite objects, the construction of a railway is by far the most effective method of opening up, not only a country, but also the minds of its inhabitants. The time was, and not so long ago, when the Indian rustic never took his seat in a train until he had laid flowers on the rail as an offering to the mysterious power which moved the engine, but nowadays all this is past, and no Western innovation or invention is more valued or patronised by all classes of the people. It furnishes the link between civilisation and the wild. As the official or sportsman knows, there is something very comfortable and reassuring in the sound of the whistle and the noise of the train after long wanderings in the silent jungles, and when the tent is once more pitched in the vicinity of even the smallest railway station, he turns in his bed with a sense of security and home-coming, which must be felt to be fully appreciated.

The traveller whose work or inclination may lead him to take a journey on such a railway as described, will be wise to provide himself with a good and suitable supply of food and drink, for nothing of the kind will be procurable *en route.*

His bedding he will, of course, have with him, for practically in India you always carry it about with you; even on a visit to a friend who will supply you with every other requirement to the extent of luxury. All "sahibs" travel first-class, and the carriages are comfortable — there are long spring-cushions to sleep upon, and there is a bathroom attached to each compartment. During the day there is endless variety in the scenery you pass through, and much to interest and amuse in the various incidents which attract the traveller's notice. There is a deliberation, moreover, about the movements of an Indian train in such localities which lends itself to observation. You saunter along an embankment which stretches across a great lake or swamp teeming with water-fowl—you stroll through a primeval forest you know is swarming with invisible wild game — you run through level fertile cultivated land dotted with little hamlets at a distance of a few miles from one another—or perhaps you push your way along an avenue cut through the elephant-grass growing on either side to a height of from ten to twenty feet from the ground. All this is exhilarating in the sunlight, but when the shades of night begin to fall, the situation becomes somewhat eerie. You see the clouds of dust rising in the plains where the cattle are slowly wending their way home to the villages, and you reflect that the tiger is possibly hanging on the outskirts of the drove, if perchance one may linger behind in the darkness.

You picture the forest glade with its modest crop protected by the strings stretched across it which agitate the rough metal bells hung up to scare off marauding beasts which may encounter the entanglement; and you fancy the half-wild cultivator crouching in his little hut and speculating in some trepidation upon the character of his nocturnal visitors! You mark the big fruit-eating bats on their way to rob the orchards of civilisation; you note the furtive jackal emerging from his lair among the scrubby growth in the sandhills; and you think of how all wild things are waking up and about to sally forth in search of the food gathered with the keen bright eyes and cocked attentive ears which alone protect the forager from furnishing the meal he himself seeks. For very ruthless are Nature's ways. As Ernest Thompson Seton truly says, every wild creature's death is more or less a tragedy.

At intervals along this isolated and carefully-laid track, so incongruous with its surroundings, are situated little wayside stations; many of them hardly better than shanties, with a few modest tenements for the native officials and one slightly more pretentious for the station-master, clustered about them. Sometimes a village of some size will be near the spot; though more usually this will be a mile or so away, or even more distant. There will always be a good well close by, and occasionally a dejected-looking "bunneah," or shopkeeper, will have set up an unpretending

stall for the sale of simple food to wayfarers. A metalled road will generally connect the railway station with the nearest town or village of any consequence, and upon this, or the dusty or muddy country tracks, the produce of the fields or forests will dribble along in great carts constructed mostly of bamboo and string and drawn by patient plodding oxen, until it reaches the goods-yard and is transferred to the trucks on a small siding. Anything more monotonous and depressing than life at one of these small railway stations it is hard to conceive. For the menials, it is true, it is somewhat better, for they are more or less in touch with the inhabitants of the nearest villages; but the nature of his duties necessitates a certain amount of education in the official in charge, and he is, more often than not, a man brought up in cities and without the faintest glimmering of interest in Nature or sport. Very few trains pass in the twenty-four hours; his subordinates are no companions; his food is of the poorest; his days are dreary and uneventful; and at night his soul is frequently harrowed by the roar of some savage beast in the vicinity, or the presence of a venomous snake in his dwelling. It is small wonder, therefore, that the authorities find no little difficulty in satisfactorily filling up these posts, or that applications for transfers from the holders of these isolated appointments should be frequent, ingenious, and commonly mendacious.

All this made the conduct of Antonio da Silva, the station-master of Mowglipore Road, the more creditable, if surprising. The name of the place might have led to caution in the mind of an experienced man contemplating the acceptance of the appointment, for it often happens in India that a station bearing a similar title is certainly on the road to some important place, but some twenty or thirty miles away from it. This was the case in the present instance, for Mowglipore Road was situated in a locality without a village in the vicinity, and immediately upon the margin of an extensive "jheel" or lake; the favourite haunt of vast flocks of wild-fowl in the cold season, and a fertile source of malarial fever for the rest of the year. And it was in consequence of the existence of this "jheel" that I first made the acquaintance of the hero of this tale.

Now what pleased, but somewhat mystified, the railway authorities, was that never a complaint, never a murmur, never an application for leave or transfer, reached them from Antonio. He was a good-looking, pleasant, smiling man of some thirty-five years of age; coffee-coloured, it is true, in hue, but claiming to be the offspring of a Portuguese gentleman of high birth in the south of India who had contracted an alliance with a dusky daughter of the soil. This male ancestor, stated to be a man of much wealth, and who bore the proud name of Da Silva, had, according to Antonio, become involved

in certain political schemes, highly creditable to himself, but which had unfortunately led to the impoverishment of his family, and had necessitated the acceptance on the part of his son of his present modest appointment — from which, however, he confidently hoped to be soon promoted by the kind help of his patrons. This interesting explanation was to some extent supported by the demeanour of the narrator. He spoke English remarkably well, his manner was dignified, courteous and ingratiating—and perhaps these advantages may have led to a less rigid scrutiny than usual of his credentials when he applied for a post; the filling up of which was not, as a matter of fact, a particularly easy undertaking. His conduct of his duties, moreover, was excellent, his punctual and accurate submission of reports and accounts were deserving of the highest praise, and he was generally regarded as a type of what a district station-master seldom is, but always ought to be.

Now Mowglipore Road, the scene of the labours of this impecunious paragon, was only about fifty miles from Doulatabad where a British regiment was stationed, and we, the officers of this, were in the habit of running down by a night train to the little wayside station, shooting through the day, and returning by an evening train to head-quarters. To us Antonio had thoroughly endeared himself. To get out of the train in such a locality ordinarily meant some hours wasted time hunting

up coolies, beaters and boatmen—a good deal of discomfort—and indifferent sport. All this, however, was removed and rendered unnecessary by our trusty friend. A letter sent to him the day before, resulted in the appearance on the platform on our arrival of a posse of natives ready to assist us, while Antonio, dressed in remarkable European garments, smilingly awaited us and implored our acceptance of his hospitality in the form of boiled tea, white buffalo-milk butter, and unleavened cakes, attractively set out on a dingy white cloth spread on the official writing-table. Very jolly, indeed, were the days so spent. Two "dug-outs," or hollowed-out trees, connected together and rendered stable by the simple expedient of lashing a native bedstead across them, awaited each sportsman; while two boatmen, squatting on their heels, punted the weird craft about the "jheel" or among the reeds on its margin. The geese, duck, and teal were innumerable. Perhaps the best sport was obtained by flushing the birds in the reeds, but even when they were all thoroughly alarmed and flying in great clouds up and down the lake, they often came within shot of one or other of the gunners, and fell with a gratifying "flop," dead or crippled, into the water. Then what jovial lunches we had together in the middle of the day, when the tiffin baskets were opened, the whisky-and-soda quaffed, and the bag up to date laid out for inspection, comment and discussion of the incidents which had attended the

gathering of the slain! It was generally a very mixed bag indeed. Greylags and barred geese, mallards, pochards, pintails, gadwalls, spotted-bills and other ducks; common and blue-winged teal; a stray bittern flopping out of the rushes; a fish which had jumped into the boat by the shore or a big water-snake surprised lying half asleep in the reeds: it was a curious collection, but the very variety of it was in itself a great charm. Then after lunch, more fun with the water-fowl, and perhaps a little beating up of the grass in the neighbourhood of the lake for a hare or a few quail. We generally wound up with the snipe; for although, of course, they did not lie so well as they would have done in the heat of the day, the firing at them earlier would have scared away the ducks, whereas firing at the latter did not worry the snipe. It was a happy, if tired, party which wended its way to the railway station as the shades of evening fell,—and there, sure enough, was always waiting the smiling invaluable Antonio, congratulating us on our prowess, and once more spreading out his impossible entertainment for our refreshment and delectation!

Many and very pleasant were the expeditions so planned and carried out—but one evil day sad news reached Doulatabad. Antonio was gone! The information was conveyed to us at the Club by a party which had gone out to shoot—had found no arrangements made—had spent

some hours in fruitless attempts to procure assistance—and had returned after a miserable and profitless trip. They had found Mowglipore Road in charge of a lamenting and unknown creature, apparently a Bengalee, who had been ordered, he said, to suddenly proceed there, and had found the place untenanted save by a particularly unintelligent native pointsman. From him it had been with difficulty elicited that two days ago, Antonio, after a brief conversation with a native traveller in the down night train, had packed up his portable belongings and disappeared — followed soon after by the remainder of the staff. With his usual courtesy, he had left a message to be sent in to headquarters, that in consequence of the sudden illness of his mother he had felt compelled to resign. Then the present incumbent had been sent down post haste by the authorities, and a superior officer of the inspecting staff had been to the spot to inquire into the matter.

This was all, and the news was received in gloomy silence. An inquiry made of one of the railway officials as to the circumstances of the case, was met by a totally unexpected and unwontedly rude denial of any knowledge of the affair. It was some time before the real facts came out. Antonio, our trusty helper and amiable host, had, alas! been far from what we had fondly conceived. There were presently rumours, based upon too much foundation, of unholy revels having been held in the remote station, always coinciding

with the arrival by train of small casks labelled "castor oil," and consigned to a purely imaginary landowner in the neighbourhood. Worse, he had, it seemed, been concerned in certain nefarious operations, skilfully designed and cleverly carried out. For some time the produce and goods consigned from Mowglipore Road had been falling off in quantity — a fact attributed by the station-master, in his official reports, to the unusual prevalence of various diseases among the crops, and a hitherto unsuspected deficiency in the local rainfall. But it had come to be noticed that whereas the consignments from Mowglipore Road had declined, those from the nearest stations up and down the line had correspondingly increased, and an inquiry, cautiously conducted, had very soon unravelled the mystery. The little country tracks from the villages by which the produce reached its destination, all presently converged upon, and blended with, certain broad metalled "feeder" roads passing direct to the railway station. Upon each of these, it transpired, the degenerate descendant of the Da Silvas had improvised a temporary toll-bar—placed in charge of one of his subordinates decorated with a spurious badge of office, and provided with a bogus Government Order in the vernacular imposing a charge of one rupee upon every cart or conveyance passing the barrier! Seeing that in harvest-time certainly some twenty or thirty carts reached the station every day, the enterprise must have been

a profitable one, and, by the careful "shepherding" of any casual Europeans or officials who visited the spot, had been run without detection for a considerable time. The promoters no doubt were far too astute not to have foreseen the probability of a sudden exposure, and it was conjectured that an arrangement had existed by which timely information could be sent to them by some one who had access to the correspondence in the head office—and who had probably travelled in the train the arrival of which had been the signal for the conspirators' departure. Indeed, one of the party who was subsequently captured and went to stay with his father-in-law—which is an Indian euphemism for residence in one of His Majesty's jails—confirmed the supposition. But of Antonio, that courteous and engaging rascal, nothing more was ever seen or heard again. *Abiit, excessit, evasit, erupit.* We missed him dreadfully.

IX.

AN ORIENTAL STRATAGEM.

India, with its population of over 300 millions, necessarily presents among its peoples all varieties of men and morals. In view of its vast size, it is not safe to assign to such a population any typical characteristics, but it is impossible to dissociate the Indian, any more than any other Oriental, from the idea of subtlety. And what Oriental subtlety is, only the experienced official in close contact with Asiatics ever really comes to know. It is polite but persistent, unaggressive but untiring, and a great part of the Anglo-Indian's education, when he comes to the East, consists in learning how to deal with it with caution and patience. Whatever its origin, it seems a part of the atmosphere of the Orient, and it is a curious spectacle to watch the mentally acclimatised Western fencing with the astute inhabitants of India, without a trace of animosity being engendered on either side by the encounter! This is the case in big things and small, and perhaps in the latter connection a tale may be told.

An Indian prison generally consists of an outer high wall enclosing an area of some acres of grass land dotted about with various buildings such as storehouses, factories, &c., and entered by a large gateway with double gates on either side of which are situated the offices and the show-rooms for the various articles manufactured in the jail—for most of the prisoners are taught or have learnt some sort of trade, and nearly all the clothing, blankets, &c., required for the use of the inmates are made there, besides such things as carpets, floorcloths, woodwork, &c., &c., which are sold to the general public. Outside the outer walls are generally gardens and fields cultivated by the prisoners, in which vegetables, cereals, fruit, &c., are grown for their use and consumption — the prevention of scurvy by the introduction of anti-scorbutics into the diet scale being a very important factor in maintaining the health of such populations. In the centre of the ground enclosed by the outer wall is a second enclosure, usually circular in form, and within this again a smaller one of the same shape. The space between these two walls is sub-divided by other walls, radiating from the centre, into more or less triangular enclosures, in each of which is situated a barrack with bathing place, &c. In the heart of this block of buildings and compartments, like the hub of a wheel, is placed the cook-house, where the meals for the prisoners are prepared. All the enclosures and buildings are of course provided with strong locked iron

gates in charge of warders. Outside the main gate are the guard-room for the police sepoys and the houses and dwellings of the various officials, &c.; while the residence of the Superintendent or governor is situated in its own grounds in the immediate vicinity.

The staff consists usually of a European medical officer as governor, a jailor and assistant jailor, also both Europeans—and a considerable number of Indian subordinates, comprising an armed police guard, warders, hospital assistants, &c. Such a prison as the one described would commonly hold from 1500 to 2000 prisoners, and the efficient conduct and control of such an institution, it may well be understood, demands no little ability and astuteness on the part of the officer in charge.

Now Selwyn Sahib, sitting in the office of the jail of which he was governor, had issued a mysterious order. A number of prisoners were to be at once put on to deepen an old well just inside the outer wall, which for many years had been disused. There were plenty of other wells yielding a good and plentiful supply of water, and there seemed no reason whatever for the action. Still, there was the order, and it had to be obeyed. Its reception by the Indian subordinates indicated no surprise or interest, but a very careful observer might have noticed a sudden gleam of attention passing over the carefully disciplined features of Mahabir Pershad, the second clerk, when he heard the instructions given; and that night he and his

wife sat smoking and talking quietly for some hours into the warm darkness.

Meanwhile Selwyn Sahib, returning to his bungalow, took out of his pocket for re-perusal a missive which had reached him by post on the previous morning. It ran: "To the Honourable Selwyn Sahib Bahadur. A well-wisher of the Sirkar (Government) has spent many sleepless nights awake, seeing how wicked men have deceived the Cherisher of the Poor. The sahib has often shown his red eye because tobacco is found in the jail against his orders. This is the work of a very wicked man, Durga Singh, who owns the village just outside the walls of the jail, where he lives. Every night this base one throws tobacco over the wall, so that the prisoners get it in the morning, and their friends in the city pay him. If it be the will of the sahib to punish this wicked man, he should deepen the jail well under the wall, so that Durga Singh's well may run dry; for it is a shallow one and close by, and by the mercy of God it may thus happen that in this hot weather his crops may wither up because he can get no water to refresh them, and so he may be ruined. All day and night this well-wisher of the Government prays for the life and prosperity of the sahib and his family members."

The letter was unsigned, but it was true that Selwyn had been much annoyed by his inability to check the illicit entrance of tobacco into the prison, and his punishment record was getting long—a

fact of which a paternal but not omniscient administration disapproves. All conceivable means had been tried to put a stop to the practice, but without result. The police guard, the patrolling watchmen and the warders, had been subjected to the strictest supervision; everything that came into the jail had been most carefully examined;—and yet day after day prisoners were discovered with the drug in their possession. Of course Selwyn had suspected the owner of the so-called village, which was merely a collection of three or four huts; but the man bore a good character, was always at work in his few fields near his dwelling, and presented, moreover, the appearance of a guileless and particularly stupid agriculturist, and the last sort of person to put himself in opposition to the wishes of the authorities. Still Selwyn thought that there might be something in the suggestions conveyed in the letter, and issued the orders referred to.

Next day the well had been deepened ten feet, and in the evening Mahabir Pershad, strolling round the hamlet, accidentally met Durga Singh, who, after some polite remarks, reminded him that the fifty rupees he had lent him for his daughter's marriage had remained for a long while unpaid, and added that if it were not forthcoming with interest at once, he should, with pain, be compelled to take proceedings against him, which he feared would get him into trouble with his superiors. Mahabir Pershad expressed much sorrow at the

delay, stating that he had proposed to ask the "sahib" for an advance of pay to meet the debt, but regretted that the time just now was most inopportune, as that officer was very busy indeed deepening a well close to Durga Singh's; though for what purpose God alone knew. Durga Singh evinced no interest in the communication, and Mahabir Pershad continued that the "sahib" was in some respects a very good "sahib," but was occasionally subject to fits of acute madness, during which attacks he was a true "shaitan" (devil). Just now he was very bad, and had put on five hundred men (a slight exaggeration), swearing that he would dig a well to the centre of the earth. The farmer pondered a little, gave his friend a pleasant parting wish for health and prosperity, and added that he would allow him a little more time before he sued him in court.

Next day he put on some labourers to deepen his own well. This, according to Mahabir Pershad's information, was a disastrous move, for Selwyn Sahib, worse than ever, had sworn another fearful oath that no one else should dig a well as deep as his own, and that, if necessary, every prisoner in the jail (about 2000) should work at it for a year. The clerk, it appeared, had, as a friend of Durga Singh, pointed out that the crops of the latter would surely all wither and dry up if the water failed in the village well, as it certainly would do if the jail one were made much deeper; but Selwyn Sahib had used terrible

language to him, and was very angry with the farmer for competing with him in his operations, and had even declared that he would ruin and hang him. After this interview Mahabir Pershad discontinued his walks round the village, and was unfortunately sick when Durga Singh presently sent him a message to come and see him at night. The latter persisted for some days in his efforts to carry down his own well as deep as the other, but the contest was hopeless, and, sure enough, presently it ran completely dry.

The event caused him much anxiety, for failure of the crops meant something like ruin, and Selwyn declined to see him or have anything to do with him. He consulted, after a little bargaining as to fees, an old friend who was a retired Indian lawyer, but derived little relief from the proceeding. It appeared, according to this authority, that he had contravened about fifteen sections of the Penal Code, the penalties for which varied from a fortnight's simple imprisonment to penal servitude for life. It was pointed out, with some justice, that conviction under even the mildest charge would probably place him under the jurisdiction of Selwyn Sahib, which was a consummation not to be desired under the circumstances. A guarded opinion was expressed regarding the alleged insanity—"sahibs" being notoriously prone to doing violent and unnecessary things. It was to be surmised, moreover, that if Selwyn Sahib did not at present possess sufficient information

and evidence, there was probably some one ready to provide them; and it was finally recommended that if possible the matter should be squared. The advice very closely accorded with the farmer's own views, and was perhaps on the whole sounder than is always given, and well worth the five rupees which Durga Singh grudgingly doled out to his adviser.

So with some difficulty a meeting was arranged with the clerk (now better) in a grove of trees at some distance from the jail, and there, while both squatted on the ground and smoked their "hookahs," Durga Singh related his trouble, adding, "of a truth it is rightly said that Selwyn Sahib is a devil." To this the clerk guardedly assented. "When he is mad, he is so, but when he is well, he is a good man and listens to counsel, and even the voice of this poor one finds favour with him," he said. The farmer looked at the speaker shrewdly. "The crops have been bad for three years, and there are seventeen worthless relatives feeding upon me," he continued rather inconsequently. Ten minutes of silent smoking followed, and then Mahabir Pershad rose to depart. "It is the will of God," he said sadly, "I also am a very poor man. There is a bond for fifty rupees——" "Seventy-five with interest," said the landowner softly; "it might be that a favourable word from a friend such as thou art, Mahabir Pershad, would prove of service. If ten rupees——" The clerk sniffed contemptuously. "It is truly said," he

soliloquised, "that by the mercy of God a great evil is often prevented by the happening of a smaller. But I must go." Durga Singh laid a detaining hand on his friend's arm, who reluctantly sat down again and smoked for a space of some minutes. Then the clerk commenced a description of a Bengali circus which had recently visited the town, and passed lightly from this to the consideration of a forecast he had read predicting a failure of the rains. He was proceeding to a relation of the iniquity of one of his wife's cousins, when Durga Singh, who had listened abstractedly while his companion watched him like a hawk, stopped him. "There are things still to be spoken," he said, sighing, "it might be that for a friend's assistance twenty rupees could with great difficulty be forgiven from his debt." The clerk appeared to ponder for some moments, and then shook his head slowly—"with less than forty rupees forgiven, this poor one and his family members will surely starve," he said, making a movement to rise. This was too much for the patience of the less astute politician. "Thou, too, art a devil and a robber," he broke out. Mahabir Pershad smiled gently, relit his "hookah," and shrugged his shoulders.

A good deal of discussion and considerable wrangling ensued between the two worthies—at length, metaphorically, at real grips with one another—at the end of which, however, Durga Singh agreed to hand over his bond to the clerk

for thirty rupees, on the condition that the latter spoke to Selwyn Sahib in his favour and obtained him an interview. No reference was to be made to the conference. The colloquy then terminated with mutual expressions of good wishes for health and prosperity—Durga Singh departed with sighs which presently changed to curses—and Mahabir Pershad returned circuitously to his home with a faint smile on his usually lugubrious face.

There was not much difficulty about procuring the interview, and the bond duly changed hands. Selwyn was a kind-hearted man, and listened sympathetically to Mahabir Pershad's description of the farmer's misery and despair, although he was not inclined to credit the addition that one of his women-folk was now lying at the point of death as the result of grief and anxiety at the prospect of immediate starvation. The meeting took place in Selwyn's office in his own house, and was private. Durga Singh, on entering, slipped off his shoes, laid his "puggri" at the "sahib's" feet, "salaamed" deeply, and remained standing with tears running down his face. Selwyn roughly bade him take up his head-gear, and coldly asked him his business. It seemed that when the farmer attempted to deepen his well, it was far from that poor slave's thoughts to enter into rivalry with the exalted Friend of the Poor, if the latter desired, doubtless for some good and wise reason, to dig a well to the centre of the earth. Selwyn stared, and then presently a smile of comprehen-

sion crossed his face. "That was not my purpose—you have been misinformed," he said. "I was deepening the well to receive all the tobacco which Durga Singh and his relatives throw over the jail wall for the prisoners." It was now the farmer's turn to stare, but across his countenance, too, there presently stole a look of intelligence in which a trace of anger might be discerned as he thought of the crafty clerk. He sobbed with some difficulty for some minutes, casting an acute glance through his tears at the indifferent governor. Then he said slowly and simply, "No more tobacco will come over the wall, sahib." "Then water shall flow under the jail walls to the fields," said Selwyn, "and it may be, that if faith be kept, the well will be partly filled up." Durga Singh again "salaamed" deeply: "On my head be it," he said quietly, and, shuffling into his shoes, departed.

And no more tobacco did come over the wall: the prisoners lamented, and the farmer's fields grew green from irrigation. Mahabir Pershad applied for a transfer, which was granted without difficulty as his aged mother had telegraphed that she wished to see her son before she died, and she happened to reside in the very town in which his contemplated new appointment was situated. But the night before his departure he was found very severely beaten in a field near his house, though he declined to give information to the police on the unselfish ground that as his presence was urgently required in his new post, he was loath to cause

delay in joining his appointment by giving evidence, and preferred to subordinate his private affairs to the convenience of Government. Selwyn smiled grimly when he heard of the incident — Durga Singh was as good as his word, and grew his crops in peace—and the jail subordinates smiled, and predicted a bright and prosperous career for the clerk, as a particularly able and intelligent man. But they were of course unaware that in a confidential "character book" kept locked up in his new master's office was a certified entry which ran: "Mahabir Pershad. 2nd clerk—transferred. An industrious and capable rascal.

"(Signed) G. Selwyn."

X.

THE LITTLE CRICKET.

Moolchund, "bunneah" or shopkeeper, sits in his shop in the bazaar at Wazirabad. The terms shopkeeper and shop do not, it must be understood, connote the same idea in the East as in the West. Moolchund, for instance, was merely a seller of the few articles of food which serve the purposes of the middle and lower class Hindus. His stock-in-trade was bestowed around him in little sacks half turned down to expose their contents, and to facilitate removal of portions when a sale was effected; for, as a rule, the vending was on a very modest scale, and the purchaser as often as not took his goods away with him tied up in the corner of his waist-cloth, or carried in a little earthen pot. The principal articles thus exposed for sale were rice, of various kinds and descriptions; wheat, divided, for culinary purposes, into whole meal, and the starchy portion of the grain separated from the husks by a process of shaking the flour in a little tray made of reeds, —an operation which, simple as it seems, demands

considerable skill to perform properly. Then there were the various pulses or leguminous food-stuffs necessary to replace the nitrogen which would have been consumed as meat by a flesh-eating people. Other bags held the red and green chillies, turmeric, asafœtida, cocoanut, pepper, &c., required for the preparation of curries and other condimentary stimulants to digestion. Salt, the cheap and powdered kind, and great blocks of opalescent rock-salt—white, and with a faint pink tinge—was also there. Curiously-shaped hairless skin bottles some two feet high, at the back of the shop, held the clarified butter known as "ghi,"—without the use of which no Hindu considers a meal to be satisfactorily prepared.

The house is one of a long line of mud wall structures, raised on a plinth about eighteen inches above the ground to avoid damp. The shop proper, the front room, is really only a verandah, being open in front to the street, and about ten feet long, six or seven feet deep, and some six feet high. Here it is that the goods are shown and business transacted. A door at the back leads into a dark unventilated chamber where the stores are kept; while a rickety staircase out of this conducts to two or three rooms above, where the "bunneah" and his family sleep in the cold weather. A small courtyard behind the dwellings contains the cooking and washing places necessitated by the very primitive habits of the residents.

With the exception of certain rough wooden stringed cots, furniture is absent; a few cheap cotton carpets more or less cover the floors; and the only decorations are a few gaudily-coloured and hideous unframed oleographs of gods and their consorts—if we except the great red-ochre figure of a demon on the front of the dwelling. This last is there more for a utilitarian than æsthetic reason, for it serves to warn off evil spirits; and it is occasionally replaced by an extravagantly badly depicted representation of a British soldier—the latter being regarded, in the absence of an available indigenous deterrent, as a very efficient substitute for the purpose.

In the centre of the shop, hemmed in with his various little sacks, bags, and utensils, squats Moolchund. He is about forty years of age, clean shaven, naked to the waist, and the sacred string hangs from one shoulder over a great fat chest and prominent paunch. He pays no attention to the solicitation of business; devoting his time to taking pulls at his water-pipe which stands beside him, or to scanning and cogitating over the entries in a long narrow thick book with coarse brown leaves, bound in a kind of red canvas cover. When the occasional customer arrives, a sort of screech summons Balchund, his eldest son (an exact replica of his father, less developed), from the recesses of the dark unsavoury room behind, where he is engaged in mysterious processes involved in the sorting out and adulteration of the stored

goods. No deal is ever transacted without a wrangle, in the course of which Balchund exhibits high qualities as an Oriental tradesman, carrying on an excited argument in a high-pitched voice—while his father sits silent, as undisturbed and immovable as a graven image. Complicated as methods of barter apparently are in the East, they are in reality simple,—the seller demands exactly twice as much as he is willing to accept, while the buyer offers exactly half of what he is prepared to give. With a knowledge of the system on both sides, an arrangement is always eventually arrived at, with the trifling disadvantage of that loss of time which no Oriental sees any objection to.

It would be a mistake to suppose that there is anything aimless about the obese trader's study of his curious books, or that he relies altogether for his subsistence on his actual takings in the shop. He is also a money-lender, and there is very little concerning the pecuniary affairs of his neighbours with which he is not acquainted. His usual rate of interest for small and temporary loans is one anna in the rupee per mensem, or about 75 per cent—sufficiently high, but for this he takes considerable risks, and he has many bad debts. His charges are not regarded as exorbitant by his clients, for custom has sanctioned them, and it is possible, indeed, that in a country where crops and occupations are precarious, the extinction of his fraternity might not prove an altogether unmixed blessing to the community at large.

However this may be, it is certain that Moolchund is a man of some considerable substance, and sees no reason to depart from the method of business and the views of life generally, which have commended themselves to his father and forefathers for many generations; and which have been quite naturally absorbed and adopted not only by his eldest, but also by his second, son, who occupies a similar position in the house of his father-in-law, in another part of the country. He is of course married, and his wife Lallee is very much alive. Although she is only thirty-five years of age, she has already lost most of her physical attractions; but she is shrewd, and takes no unimportant part in the ordering of affairs in the little circle. Quite illiterate and steeped in ignorance, and the contentment which, strangely enough, so often accompanies these deficiencies, she possesses, to a useful extent, the protective instincts of what was formerly regarded as the weaker sex. Moolchund, in whom the deductive faculty is imperfectly developed, always consults her in matters, not infrequent, in which he finds it difficult to make up his own mind; and has learnt by experience to attach considerable importance to advice and opinion, totally devoid of any logical basis, but which is nevertheless found in practice to be very generally applicable and correct.

The family consists of the "bunneah" and his wife, their two elder sons, three daughters married

and settled in their homes, and—most important addition—Hari Dass, his last-born boy, of some five or six years of age. Moolchund and his wife would have described the "mizaj" (temperament) of their elder children as "mammooli" (ordinary or normal), — that is to say, they lived and thought very much as their parents did; but Hari Dass was an exception. Somewhere hidden in the sluggish mental constitution of his father was a feeling of sincere pride and affection for his little son, and this was equally shared by his brighter and more active-minded wife, though accompanied in the latter case by haunting fear and anxiety. For Hari Dass was a pearl among children. Handsome, healthy, intelligent and affectionate, the little bright-eyed lad was the joy of the home. Always ready in his childish way with pleasant words and kindly acts, he was a general favourite, and yet seemed unspoilt by the petting he received. Just such a child indeed, as his mother knew, as malevolent gods would single out as their prey, or upon whom envious people might cast the spell of the Evil Eye. Lallee had done her best to avoid such troubles. She had dressed him in the plainest and most sombre of clothes; had never spoken but depreciatingly of him; had called him always, as a suitably contemptuous appellation, "the little cricket"; and had kept him carefully, as far as was possible, from the sight of strangers. His very name of Hari Dass was not his own, and

the real one, recorded in his horoscope, was known only to his father, the family priest, and herself —lest the knowledge should be utilised by a malicious person to work him harm. She had even contemplated letting his hair grow, dressing him in girl's clothing, and giving him a female name. Many were the prayers and offerings made by her to the kindly boy-god Krishna—the beloved of Hindu mothers—for his safety; and many, if truth be told, to malevolent deities also, to disarm their attacks.

Under such circumstances did little Hari Dass gain his earlier experiences of life. Of moral education, as we understand the term, he received but little. The "bunneahs" conversation dealt entirely with sordid trading matters and the affairs of the microcosm in which his life was cast, and had certainly no elevating tendency. From the "guru," or religious teacher, it is true, he derived instruction concerning reverence for the gods, obligations to parents, the observance of ritual, and certain caste conventions and requirements—many of them not devoid of useful social and sanitary detail. But Lallee, wise woman as she was according to her lights, could not convey to the child what had never been impressed on herself, and entirely failed to inculcate those principles of discipline, self-control, integrity, and regard for truth, so essential as a foundation in building up a robust, self-reliant, and honourable character. She was just a fond

ignorant mother, and remembering her upbringing, who shall cast a stone against her? But there is no doubt that the lad suffered severely later as the result of the defects of his early training.

Years passed, and the lad grew in stature and intellect. Wazirabad was not an important town, but it was sufficiently large to possess not only vernacular and advanced schools, but also an educational institution which bore the proud title of College. To the former Hari Dass was sent, and very speedily delighted his masters and almost paralysed his father, by the exhibition of wonderful powers of application and distinct indications of genius. Lallee was torn with conflicting thoughts in which pride struggled with misgiving; but about one thing she was resolved, and that was that under no circumstances should he leave his native town to be educated elsewhere, and in this she was strongly supported not only by the "guru," but also by the "parohit" or family priest. But it was otherwise ordained, and about this time occurred an incident which had a great effect on the boy's future.

One of the details of their lives which Hindus, both male and female, particularly observe and enjoy, is the morning bath. It is an important part of their religious and caste observances—cleanly and pleasurable. Wazirabad, like most Indian towns of any consequence, stood on the banks of a deep, broad river, and along the shore

were several well-constructed shallow stone flights of steps for the convenience of bathers—the largest of which was appropriated for the use of females only. Lallee, on a certain morning, was one of a large crowd of women worshipping and performing their ablutions in the water. It was very early—just indeed when the sun had appeared above the horizon and had not yet acquired the pitiless fierceness which would characterise it later on. The scene was strangely picturesque and peaceful. The deep and rapid river, the sunlight glancing on the water, the blue, calm sky, the bright and varied colours of the clothing of the bathers, the song of birds in the big peepul-tree which sheltered the women and children gathered on the stone steps, or splashing in the river at their feet,—all produced a most pleasing and delightful effect. The still fresh morning air rang with cheerful laughter and song. No one noticed the great black knob which moved silently and slowly along the surface of the deep stream in the direction of the "ghat" or bathing-place. Suddenly there was a rush through the water of a huge, dark, loathsome monster—a vision of two great raised wicked jaws—an agonising shriek—and then, for a brief moment, silence. It was, however, almost instantly broken by a chorus of screams, the sound of frightened women fleeing to the shore, and the shouts and yells of men and boys hastening to the spot. But there was nothing now to be seen save a red streak upon the placid face of the river,

which flowed on as if nothing unusual had occurred. When the terrified women clustered together under the peepul-tree, wailing and sobbing, it was found that one was absent. Poor Lallee, seized by a hideous "muggur," or snub-nosed crocodile, was never seen again.

The tragedy, as said before, had an important influence on Hari Dass's future. Moolchund received the intelligence of his wife's death with an appearance of resigned stoicism which was altogether misleading. He felt, indeed, her loss greatly; but after sorrowing in a bovine manner for some months, he married again. His second wife was younger than Lallee, had no great fancy for having the young student about the house, and readily espoused his cause when he expressed a desire to go to college; and, moreover, pointed out that the time had now arrived when Hari Dass should formally wed the young girl to whom he had been betrothed as a child. But Moolchund, if anything, was a man of business, and knew that the amount of her dowry would be materially affected by the status of his son at the date of the marriage — for a graduate has a distinct and special value in the Indian matrimonial market. So the ceremony was postponed for a time (the horoscope fortunately indicating that this was desirable), and Hari Dass went to college. Here his second great misfortune befell. When he entered, the headmaster was an Englishman—clever, conscientious, though perhaps a little hot-

tempered. A certain boy who had been giving a good deal of trouble, was at last caught in some particularly flagrant and disgraceful proceeding, and the headmaster, brought up in an English public school, promptly laid the delinquent across a desk and administered a castigation under circumstances and conditions unresented by the sons of the British aristocracy, but appalling to the sentiments of the Indian parent. Great was the outcry that followed. The college was under the control of a committee largely composed of the boy's friends, and although the fear of higher authorities prevented his actual dismissal, the headmaster was subjected to such a system of petty annoyance and covert insult that he very soon resigned; and a Calcutta B.A., one Baboo Chandra Lal, was appointed in his stead.

This man would have provided an interesting study for the psychologist. In his domestic affairs he was a good husband and parent; in his scholastic work he was industrious and capable; and he was free, at least, from the bolder vices. If an unusual faculty for absorbing formulas, and the possession of a certain nimbleness of intellect, be regarded as cleverness, he was clever—but he had no robustness either of mind or body, and was a thoroughly discontented man. Despising the great majority of his more or less uneducated fellow-countrymen, and having very few feelings in common with Europeans, he bitterly resented his position in a society in which, if (as he had been led to

believe) intellectual attainments constituted the touchstone of merit, he was calculated not only to hold his own but even in some degree to shine. His parents had been of the lower middle class, and although his father had acquired some smattering of Western ideas, his mother had been steeped in the ignorance and superstition which is unfortunately to-day so common among women in India. He had been taught as a child to presume on the clemency of a benign god or an indulgent master, and to cringe to a malevolent deity or a stern superior; and his only real object of worship, howsoever and by whomsoever manifested, was power. With the recognition of this attribute in an individual came respect and something like devotion — without it, something like contempt, easily passing into rebellion. He was essentially, for good or evil, the result of his environment. With a healthy bringing-up and under firm sympathetic treatment he would probably have developed into a very fair citizen; as it was, he had been starved morally and gorged intellectually, with deplorable results.

All this, however, might have come with time and happier conditions to right itself, but for the destruction of his ideals and the hopeless jumble into which he had got his beliefs. He had naturally found the acceptance of Western philosophical thought incompatible with the retention of most of the tenets of the Hindu religion, and the struggle, honestly attempted, to reconcile such divergent

teachings, had led to a state of something like mental chaos. His mind was a curious compound of metaphysical speculation, genuine knowledge, and very human simplicity and weakness. In the revulsion of feeling which follows disillusionment, he felt little desire, or despaired of the attempt, to substitute anything for the faith he had lost, or to replace the idols which had fallen to the ground, and he was, in fact, no longer capable of forming a conception of perfection, but looked on life and man with a sort of hopeless cynicism. All that he was convinced of was that everything was radically wrong, and, regarding the Government as responsible for this state of affairs, he was satisfied that it must be subverted and done away with before there could be any real hope of improvement. With the question of what was to replace it when this was accomplished he did not concern himself—*that* lay on the lap of some gods —of what gods he was not sure.

Such was the man appointed to instruct the minds, and mould the thoughts, of a large body of impressionable and receptive young Indian lads. It must not be supposed, however, that Baboo Chandra Lal openly displayed these sentiments. He was a poor man, entirely dependent on his salary as schoolmaster, and had a holy dread of the "magistrate sahib" who was president of the school committee; albeit the latter had little time for this portion of his duties, being often away on inspection duty, or engaged in one or

other of the multifarious tasks nowadays demanded from the Indian civilian. But the Baboo had a real liking for the bright, appreciative lad—it was a relief to unburden his soul—and he often summoned Hari Dass to his quarters, and squatting there, after divesting himself of his European clothes in which he never felt really comfortable, he would discourse, lightly attired in a waist-cloth and a red flannel shawl over one shoulder, on men and many things. Very subtle and very intangible was the poison he disseminated, much of which, indeed, was unintelligible to the listening and admiring youth—but the seed thus sown was to bear fruit in later days.

Presently there came a day when Hari Dass, a comparatively junior student, bore off the medal of the college. Moolchund, very proud, but with much searching of heart concerning the expense, gave a big dinner to his caste-fellows, and a great many squibs and other fireworks were let off. The entertainment was a complete success; congratulations poured in upon the fortunate youth—but perhaps if Lallee had been alive she would have looked askance at the proceedings. One result was that the "bunneah" was persuaded to send his promising son to a university in a great city.

So Hari Dass started off with all the good wishes of Wazirabad; though the old "guru," in his isolated shanty, shook his venerable head and made a special offering for the lad's welfare to the great gods. Letters came to Moolchund pretty

regularly at first—descriptions of the wonders of the great city, details concerning his work, comments on the inadequacy of his allowance, and sometimes there were allusions to clubs and societies the student had begun to frequent. Occasionally also there were references to some unusual event, such as when once a "Parliament member," on tour in the country, had made a speech at one of these societies. Hari Dass had been much astonished at his eloquence and moved to much enthusiasm by what he had said; though with an instinct seldom absent from natives of India, he had naïvely added that the speaker did not seem to be a "pucka [real] sahib." Much of what was written was Greek to the rural tradesman, who proudly showed the letters to his old friend the "guru," and, while moaning at the expense, derived considerable comfort from the enhanced respect which his gifted son's position gave him in the community. Then Hari Dass came home for his vacation—pleasant as ever to his friends, but unmistakably changed. Poor Moolchund could make very little of his conversation, and follow very few of the diatribes against the Government which he sometimes indulged in. A good deal of the lad's time was passed in the perusal of vernacular newspapers reeking with sedition and misrepresentation, and sometimes he would sit for hours in brooding silence; though at others he was as cheery as ever. The Hindu religion lays very little stress upon congregational

worship, so that his neglect of religious duties was not much noticed by his friends; and his attitude to the "guru" and the family priest was correct and seemly. He went with his father to pay his respects to the "magistrate sahib," and created a good impression by his intelligence and courtesy. Altogether he was a good deal of an enigma. The "bunneah's" heart sometimes misgave him, but his son seemed to have two sides to his character, and, buoyed up by pride and affection for the boy, he hoped for the best.

There is a mysterious underground form of communication in India, and a good deal of information circulates through other than the regular channels. One day the "guru" sent for Moolchund and showed him a letter which had never passed through the post. It was to the effect that there had been a good deal of insubordination in the university in the great city—that the authorship of certain highly incendiary pamphlets had been traced to the students there—that the "Sirkar" (Government) was very angry—and that (here the poor listener's face assumed a greenish hue), Hari Dass was gravely suspected of being one of the ringleaders in the seditious movement. All one long hot night the two old men talked over the matter, and, when the day broke, a scheme had been decided upon. As a result, Moolchund called that morning on the "doctor sahib" (the Civil Surgeon), a kindly man to whom the "bunneah" had taken a strong liking, and in

whom he had reposed complete confidence ever since he had called him in in despair when suffering from a surfeit—after having conscientiously swallowed both the pills and the enclosing paper with the incantation upon it, which had been administered by the native physician without any beneficial result. To him, then, Moolchund imparted the information that Hari Dass was suffering from an obscure mental disease, and wished to have his authority to order the lad home; but Mardon, the Civil Surgeon, pointed out that he could not do this in the absence of any professional knowledge of the case. This difficulty had been foreseen, and the visitor proceeded to roll out a long string of plausible but mendacious reasons which had been agreed upon, as to why the lad should be quietly but immediately summoned. Mardon knew the people thoroughly, and, moreover, liked the bright little lad he remembered very well. He conjectured immediately that he had got into some serious trouble, of the nature of which he was not likely to hear the truth, and brusquely suggested that if this were the case the youth should simply disappear for a time until the matter should blow over, or could be arranged. This advice very well accorded with the views of both Moolchund and the "guru"; a poor relation left by train next day for the large city—and long before the authorities took their tardy action, Hari Dass had quitted the university for ever, and was in hiding in a distant part of the country. He need not, as

a matter of fact, have exercised so much caution in concealing his whereabouts, for Government had no time to bother itself about the capture of a self-sufficient schoolboy who had never actually broken the peace; but then the callow agitator had by no means regarded himself as of so little importance.

All fugitives from justice in India eventually gravitate back to their homes—a characteristic which greatly assists the police in the discharge of their duties. When Hari Dass found there was no hue and cry, it was not long before he got into touch with his afflicted father, and, on his advice, settled under an assumed name in a town some fifty miles from his home, upon a meagre allowance which was conveyed to him. Here he went rapidly from bad to worse. There was unfortunately a small but violent faction in the place, and the lad (for he was little more), smarting under the sense of failure and conscious of having wrecked his career, vented his rage on a Government to which he, unreasonably enough, attributed his downfall—and threw in his lot uncompromisingly with the anarchist element.

One of the curious methods adopted by extremists in India is to endeavour to secure more freedom for the people by robbing them for the purpose. There was a band of young men (they called themselves "volunteers") in the district in which Hari Dass now resided, which made armed descents upon little centres of population and

cruelly pillaged the harmless inhabitants of their possessions; ostensibly in order to provide funds for the advanced party. Whether any of the proceeds of this brigandage ever reached the party's exchequer is extremely doubtful, but the prevalence of these crimes became a very serious menace to the law-abiding population, despite the best efforts of the police. The secret of the selected point of attack on any particular night was carefully kept, and there was practically never any resistance experienced from the unarmed and defenceless villagers. The whole district was seriously alarmed. Similar disturbances were at that time occurring in other parts of the country, and censure has in some places been bestowed on the authorities for not taking earlier and more strenuous action to put a stop to such proceedings. But the fact probably was that those in charge of the safety of the population, well acquainted with the real nature and character of these disturbers of the peace, were tempted at first not to take the matter too seriously. The situation was one not easily appreciated by other than experienced Anglo-Indian officials. These lads and young men who had joined these bands were not in any sense armed ruffians who had systematically defied the law, and they had indeed until quite lately been well-conducted respectable sons of respectable parents. They came of a stock which had never furnished a single soldier to any army in any cause, and were essentially mere students

intoxicated with a sense of self-importance which was entirely novel to them, and the result of the perusal of a literature, which they imperfectly understood; which had been written for a people altogether differently constituted to themselves; and which had assumed the existence of a stage of political development in the reader to which comparatively few Indians have as yet attained. Impressionable to an extent bordering upon the hysterical, they were really the catspaws of more astute and cautious conspirators behind the scenes. These "volunteers," it may be said, had embarked in a puerile manner upon a sort of crusade. The term, it is true, may, on account of its associations, be taken exception to, but its use is to some extent justified by the fact that many of them acted from more or less altruistic, if extravagant and mistaken, motives. Their attitude is difficult of comprehension by the calculating matter-of-fact Western, but when the comparatively recent emergence of the Indian youth from crass ignorance and superstition is remembered, the position becomes much better understood, and for instances of analogous semi-fanatical movements we must look, not to modern times, but to periods of the world's history when a people was only just commencing generally to pass out of darkness into light. Such instances are sufficiently instructive.

But at last the pillagers made a fatal mistake in their arrangements. One night they swooped down on a little hamlet; setting fire to the huts,

and rushing upon the residents to the accompaniment of shots fired from the few weapons they possessed. The wretched people, roused from sleep by the noise and conflagration, made little attempt to defend themselves; but there happened to be staying in the village rest-house, unknown to the band, a Pathan Indian officer and his two sons. Sufdar Khan, who at no time had any particular respect for the sanctity of human life, and who, moreover, regarded down-country natives as little better than vermin, promptly ran his sword through the nearest robber up to the hilt; while his two lusty sons laid about them with the heavy iron-bound clubs they carried for protection when travelling. Thus reinforced, the villagers rallied, charged their assailants, and the whole matter was over in less than twenty minutes; for the cowardly raiders, astonished at their reception, at once gave way and fled in all directions. When the affair was over, only one body lay upon the ground, with the blood welling up from a wound through the heart, and the glazed eyes staring at the sky. And this was all that was left of the happy, cheery lad and brilliant scholar who had once been Hari Dass.

Noon next day brought the Magistrate, the Superintendent of Police, and the Civil Surgeon galloping post-haste to the scene of the attack; for the village watchman, emerging from the seclusion of a hut on the outskirts of the hamlet

as soon as the disturbance was over, had run to the nearest police post, from whence a mounted constable had carried a considerably exaggerated account of the incident to headquarters. A detailed inquiry held by the authorities on the spot exonerated Safdar Khan, but left the identity of the victim undetermined, as he was totally unknown to the villagers—nor did the subsequent investigations by the police throw any further light on the matter. Only Mardon, after dressing the few wounds received by the residents, stood and looked for a few minutes very carefully at the features of the dead lad. Rightly or wrongly, whatever he recognised or suspected he kept to himself.

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This is the story, with some modifications, as related by a weird figure covered with ashes, naked save for a waist-cloth, crouching over a few embers at a place of pilgrimage in Northern India — who was now a half-witted nameless "sadhu" or religious ascetic, but who had been known in other days as Baboo Chandra Lal. He was lamenting to his friends the premature decease of a lad who, he opined, would have proved a perfect "*chèla*" or disciple, "had the gods permitted him to attain knowledge." But, as will be obvious, most of the narrative, including the portion relating to the Baboo himself, is from other and less eccentric sources. Whether Moolchund ever heard of the nature

of his son's end, I never ascertained, and nothing in his demeanour ever indicated any change in his ordinary very limited view of life and its vicissitudes. But when he died some years later, I have heard that at the bottom of an old chest copiously studded with big metal bosses and strongly bound with iron clamps, but with a cheap lock which any one could have opened with a nail, they found, embedded in old blankets and worn-out clothes, a small packet containing a tarnished medal wrapped in a piece of country paper labelled in the vernacular apparently recently, "The little cricket; died——." The date corresponded with the one upon which Hari Dass had left Wazirabad for the great city, so, I have thought, perhaps the poor old man had known. For indeed the son he had proudly watched and loved so long had been lost to him about that time.

XI.

THE MISADVENTURES OF PAIGA.

Islamabad, a town in Upper India, while not sufficiently large or important enough to be a municipality, was sufficiently so to have come, at the present time, within the provisions of Act XX., and thereby, to the great sorrow of the inhabitants, rendered liable to be compulsorily sanitated and subjected to other wholesome but unpopular infringements of personal liberty. But in the days to which the incidents in this story relate, it was unprovided with such disguised blessings. Like so many centres of population in India, it stood on the bank of a small river, and consisted essentially of one main paved street bounded on either side by houses, in the lower stories of which the shopkeepers displayed their wares, while the upper ones, usually provided with wooden balconies overhanging the road, formed the dwelling-places of the residents. Branching off from the main thoroughfare were other smaller streets, mostly unpaved and exceedingly dirty, where dwelt the poorer classes—long lines of hovels,

broken here and there by the residence of one of the wealthier inhabitants. The principal buildings, situated about the centre of the town and opening upon the main road, were the Tehsil, where the Tehsildar, an Indian official with magisterial powers, held his court; and facing this, the Thana, or police station, where the chief Indian police official, the Thanadar, had his headquarters. Both structures were provided with large stucco Saracenic arches facing the roadway; forming the entrance to courtyards with small chambers all round. A schoolhouse and a dispensary, both of a very unpretending character, completed the public buildings. The Tehsildar and Thanadar were the representatives of the Government, and as such enjoyed considerable status and power, but there were also a certain number of fairly well-to-do men, "mahajuns" or bankers, lawyers, doctors, &c. The bulk of the population, however, consisted of the small shopkeepers already referred to, artisans plying their various caste trades, farmers, cowkeepers, agriculturists, &c.

At the period at which this story opens, there was a good deal of excitement at Islamabad. A belated villager, returning to his home, had heard a crackling noise, and seen a body of smoke issuing from the dwelling of one of the wealthiest of the residents, a banker, Balkishen by name. There should have been a watchman in the locality, but, as it subsequently transpired, he was suffering

from fever and was, according to his own statement, unconscious at the time. The villager, failing to find this guardian of the public safety, proceeded therefore to the Thana and informed the constable on duty of his discovery. This official reported the matter to the sleeping Thanadar, who thereupon summoned his subordinates. During these proceedings the villager, feeling that he had done all that could possibly be expected of him, had disappeared; and the constable was not quite sure in what street he had said the fire was. All this caused some delay, and when the party started, it was soon met by a crowd of excited people running to give the alarm. But the material of an Indian house is mostly wood, and when they reached the spot the building was in flames from basement to roof. All the neighbourhood was there to help, but there was no fire-engine; the earthen pitchers full of water were of little use; and in a very short time it was evident that nothing of any consequence to arrest the fire could be done. Luckily the buildings on either side and opposite were mere shanties, so the conflagration did not spread; and, moreover, it was presently ascertained that the only occupants of the house, the banker, his wife, and two small children, had all escaped without injury. The woman and children were given shelter by a neighbour, but the owner did not leave the spot. He was a portly, sleek Hindu of from fifty to sixty years of age, and in ordinary times was dignified in manner and quietly but

well attired. But now he squatted, dishevelled, moaning, and smoke-begrimed, on the ground — the very picture of woe. Everything he possessed, he wailed, was in the house. It was with the greatest difficulty, when it was obvious that the building was doomed, that the unfortunate man could at last be persuaded to retire to the dwelling of a friend, leaning on the arm of his servant Paiga.

Mumtaz Ahmed, the Thanadar, was a capable man, not originally born with an undue confidence in his fellow-creatures, and now, after twenty-five years' service in the police, less inclined than ever to yield to any such weakness. The day had broken, and as soon as the crowd, assisted by the ministrations of the constables, had melted away, he proceeded to inspect the ruins as far as the glowing mass of burnt timbers would allow him. A portion of a wooden staircase, nearly all destroyed, still projected from where the supports had been let into the wall; and this he found he could reach. He rubbed his hands several times over the woodwork which had escaped the flames, and applied them to his nose. The result appeared to excite him to further examination, and after spending the best part of an hour in his investigation, he put a guard over the *débris*, and returned without any remarks to the Thana.

By noon the next day it was possible to make a thorough search in the ruins for anything that might have escaped destruction, and this was

carried out by the Thanadar and Tehsildar, assisted by the now somewhat calmer banker. But there was very little found. There were two or three ingots of silver, and one of silver and gold fused together, which had evidently been collections of rupees and some gold coins, and also, — what moved the owner to renewed lamentations,—the charred remains of a great wooden chest full of what had once been paper ; for this, he excitedly declared, represented all that was left of the bonds, notes, and valuable securities which had constituted the great bulk of his fortune. The loss meant absolute ruin, for, as is commonly the case with Indians, nothing was insured. There is never much furniture in an Eastern house, and the little there had been was totally destroyed. Balkishen took away his ingots and, prostrated with grief, left the spot—and a few days later, after further fruitless searching among the ruins, disappeared from the neighbourhood.

The incident was duly reported to the authorities as an accidental fire, and Mumtaz Ahmed, like a wise man, kept his suspicions to himself since he was not in a position to prove anything. The matter, indeed, would have been speedily forgotten, but for the appearance on the scene of a number of creditors, so soon as the news of the disaster had spread abroad. But Balkishen with his belongings had totally vanished ; he was apparently a ruined man ; and the hungry horde, despairing of getting blood out of a stone, presently

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abandoned their efforts to ascertain his whereabouts, and departed. Paiga, the servant, by caste a Pasi or swineherd, obtained employment in the neighbourhood; lamenting the loss of a good master, and the undeserved misfortune which had fallen on himself. Islamabad resumed its wonted calm.

A broad, unmetalled, grass-grown road runs from Islamabad to Mozufferpore, and on the margin of this, about four miles from the former town, there is situated a small unenclosed orchard of common country mangoes, coarse fruit such as the guava, and a few oleander bushes. One morning, a few months before the incidents related, the proprietor of this, a certain Nund Kishore, visiting his property, had been surprised, and not particularly pleased, to find that a long-haired faquir, covered with ashes, had established himself in the centre of the grove among the trees, built his little "*chula*" or mud fireplace, plastered the ground all round it, spread out his mat, and made other arrangements which in the case of a religious mendicant indicate that he intends to make the spot a temporary home. A mild expostulation with the new arrival had elicited such a volley of curses as made the unfortunate owner of the property quail; and he had raised no further objection when, later on, he found that his unwelcome visitor had constructed a small platform of earth about a foot high, and had erected upon this a miserable one-roomed shanty, surmounted

by a long bamboo decorated at its end with a tawdry flag bearing the image of Hanuman, the monkey-god, rudely depicted upon it. Who the ascetic was, or from whence he came, no one knew; nor did his demeanour court inquiries. He subsisted on alms bestowed upon him by wayfarers, and presently, in the strange way that sanctity comes to cling about such persons in India, the simple villagers, mostly women, began to come to him for prayers and advice, and to regard him as a very holy man. He was a tall, spare individual between fifty and sixty years of age, with an abstracted meditative air, which was, however, somewhat out of keeping with his shrewd sparkling eyes. He seldom spoke, but then very much to the purpose, and two or three predictions happening to come true, this, coupled with his mysterious life, raised him high in the estimation of his credulous neighbours. Even people of some position in Islamabad itself, attracted by his reputation, sometimes came to consult him. There was no doubt about his sanctity, but his temper was atrocious; and when Paiga, who had also taken to visiting him, was found early one morning clubbed senseless on the road near the hut, there were many who suspected that the victim might have in some way offended the recluse. But Paiga, when he came to himself, stoutly denied this, saying he had been set upon by a band of thieves whom he had with great difficulty beaten off before losing his senses. He, however,

made no further visits to the Bairagi—for this was the sect to which the faquir belonged.

The attack was duly reported to Mumtaz Ahmed, the Thanadar, and although all his efforts to discover the assailants were unavailing, the inquiry elicited the fact that on one occasion passers-by in the darkness had heard the sound of a fierce altercation in the hut, in which the raised angry voice of the owner had been recognised, though that of the other disputant, which was pitched in a much lower key, appeared to be that of a stranger. The Thanadar could make nothing of the matter at all. He instituted cautious but careful inquiries into the antecedents of the faquir, but, as is usually the case where members of this great irresponsible wandering class are concerned, no one appeared to be able to give the least information regarding him. He remembered the suspicions of the villagers that the object of the late assault had probably fallen foul of him, and took an opportunity of more fully interrogating Paiga (now peacefully engaged in tending pigs) as to the details of his encounter with the "men in buckram." That worthy, however, after entangling himself in a mass of conflicting statements, eventually fell back upon the excuse that he could not be sure of what had actually occurred, on account of the darkness. This was all Mumtaz Ahmed wanted, for he had ascertained that the night when the incident occurred had been clear, and the moon nearly at the full. He therefore dismissed

the witness courteously and apparently satisfied—and had him carefully watched.

The reports which presently came in regarding Paiga's movements were interesting. His duties in connection with his attractive flock did not seem to be exacting, and he was in the habit, it appeared, of leaving his charge and frequenting a small grove of trees about a mile from Islamabad; and had been observed, moreover, on more than one occasion, digging at the foot of these with the small short sort of spade which is the usual implement in the hands of the Indian agriculturist, but very rarely seen in those of men of Paiga's caste. The Thanadar began to see a little light. He strongly suspected that the banker had set fire to his residence himself, for he had detected the smell of kerosene oil on parts of the materials of his house; and it was probable he had done this to defraud his creditors. This is an expedient common enough in the East, and not altogether unknown elsewhere. His servant Paiga had probably been his accomplice. But what he wanted to know was whether Balkishen had secured for himself a nest-egg before destroying his property; and if so, where he had put it. The pig-tender's explorations suggested that a similar idea had occurred to him, and that he suspected that his former master had buried his treasure in the grove of trees where he conducted his operations. The Thanadar thought the matter over long and carefully, and eventually took into his confidence a

constable—one Surfaraz Khan, a tall, fierce, black-bearded Pathan from the north.

One evening, Paiga, squatting on the ground in front of his hut and pulling contentedly at his long country pipe, found his head shrouded in a thick blanket, and his body being rapidly borne away by a couple of lusty men. On account of his caste, his dwelling was situated on the very outskirts of the village, and the smothered cries he endeavoured to utter under the blanket reached nobody's ears. In a few moments he realised that he had been bundled into a small cart, and that a rough voice was informing him that if he moved or spoke his throat would be cut from ear to ear. He was too frightened to do anything, and presently the rough jolting and tinkling of bells told him that he was being conveyed over rough ground in a vehicle drawn by trotting bullocks. The journey lasted some hours—his captors so far loosening the covering over his head as to permit him to breathe. At length, just as the first signs of dawn appeared on the horizon, the cart stopped before a low building—two strapping men with masks on hauled him roughly out, and after pitching him into a dark evil-smelling chamber, tied his arms and legs securely, and warned him that to make any sound would be the signal for his death.

When day fully broke he looked around him. He was, he at once recognised, in an old deserted stable; the stalls in which were separated from



Country Cart and Baggage.

one another by mud walls about six feet high, while the space between them and the roof was quite open. A murmuring sound of voices a short distance off denoted that other people were in the building; but the stalls on either side of the one in which he found himself, were, from the silence, apparently empty. About noon one of the men brought him food and water, but made no reply to the captive's entreaties and appeals for explanation of his treatment. Despite his alarm and anxiety however, such is the force of habit, he presently fell asleep; but was awakened suddenly by a piercing shriek in the next stall, and what sounded like heavy blows being struck. Night had fallen, and the shanty was in complete darkness, save for a faint glow as from a small fire in the vicinity. There was a minute's silence, and then a harsh low voice said, "Get up." Then followed the sound of more blows, shrieks and pleadings for mercy. Poor Paiga's heart stood still. "What is your name?" growled the same voice he had heard before. A muttering sound followed. "Son of a thousand pigs," came the voice again, but in a fiercer and higher key, "it is Balkishen, the 'mahajun' and thief. One more lie, and your tongue shall be cut out of your throat. It was you, shameless one, who set your house on fire to cheat your creditors." "Mercy, mercy; it was the scoundrel Paiga," were the alarming words which came over the wall to the ears of the pig-tender, cold and clammy with fright.

"Where did you put your money?" was the next inquiry in a terrible voice. No reply. "Answer, bastard." Still silence. Then to his horror the shivering listener heard the order, "Bring the hot irons." Groans and shrieks followed, and a horrible singeing odour was wafted over the divisional wall. Then the cries and piteous appeals for mercy were redoubled, and at last came a low muttering sound, and finally "that will do" from the rough voice. Clearly the victim had confessed. Paiga fainted.

When he came to, two big masked men were standing over him. "Pasi" (member of the swine-herd class), said the shorter of the pair, "if you desire to live, tell the truth. Did the carrion in the next stall, Balkishen, 'mahajun,' set fire to his house, or did you?" "Balkishen did it," stuttered the terrified man; "this slave did but obey orders. That evil one was desirous to save his money, and had carried it away secretly at night." "Good; that liar confessed as much. Where did he put it?" was the next inquiry in a somewhat milder tone. Paiga, slightly relieved, rapidly made up his mind to tell all he knew, especially since it was pretty clear that the information had been already extracted from the unfortunate banker. "Cherisher of the poor," he rapidly repeated with his forehead in the dust, grovelling on the ground at the feet of his interrogator, "this poor one has searched for a long while for the place, but without success. Often that base one went secretly to a grove near the city and this slave watched

him, but—who shall deceive the favoured one of the gods—many searches have failed to find anything there." The man gave a sneering laugh. "We know that," he said; "did your master ever go on these expeditions alone to any one?" Paiga hesitated, and the taller man nodded to his confederate. "I told you he would want the irons," he growled. The pig-tender gave a howl. "Twice he went to the faquir at the orchard of Nand Keshore," he blurted out rapidly. "Mercy, mercy; this is all this slave knows."

The men looked at one another. "Let the dog be," said the one who seemed to be the leader; and turning to the shivering wretch he said, "If you breathe a word of what you have seen and heard to-night to any living soul, we will cut your heart out. Your scoundrel of a master is dead, and as no one but ourselves knows that he has been brought here, he will never be seen or heard of again." They released the wretched Paiga, spat on him, and left him.

The two men, quitting the building, took off their masks, revealing the faces of the Thanadar and Surfaraz Khan. "We must ride hard to-night to reach Islamabad before daybreak," said the former, as they walked to where two horses stood tethered by their feet under a tree. "And what about the Hindu rogue in the orchard?" inquired Surfaraz Khan. "Ten days from now is the 'Amawas' at Hardwar," replied his companion, "and to such an important fair he will surely be

starting in a day or two. Then we can explore the place thoroughly. There is no hurry—that base-born dog will never speak."

But for once the astute Mumtaz Ahmed was mistaken. He had made two serious blunders. Paiga, cowering on the ground, heard the retreating sound of galloping horses, and after about an hour elapsing without anything occurring, raised his head and looked round. A flickering glow showed that the fire used by the torturers for heating their irons was still burning, and after a while he gathered up sufficient courage to rise, quit his prison, and go round to the next enclosure where he expected to find the dead body of his late employer. But it was quite empty. He blew up the embers of the fire and put on a little more wood, and by the light yielded by the blaze, he carefully examined the grass-grown floor of the empty stall. There were no signs of any disturbance of the grass as would have been caused by such incidents as he seemed to have overheard. Presently he noticed a log of wood, and his eye fell on a piece of fresh calf-skin—and taking the latter up, he saw where it had been recently seared by some hot implement. It had evidently been left behind by the two men. This was Mumtaz Ahmed's first oversight, and it set Paiga thinking. Suddenly a recollection flashed across his brain. The caste to which he belonged combines pig-tending with a good deal of petty larceny, and, on the principle of setting a thief to

catch a thief, the members of it are often employed as watchmen—and, curiously enough, are usually trustworthy. In the discharge of their duties these watchmen are brought a good deal into contact with the police—whose methods of detection of crime, in the times we are dealing with, though very effective, were not always of a character which would commend itself to the Western philanthropist. He remembered now having heard with much approval and admiration, at one of his caste meetings, of how the perpetrators of a great robbery had been detected by exactly such a plot as that of which he had just been a victim. The proceedings and confession he had heard, he now saw, were all fictitious and part of a cleverly acted play — the "mahajun" had never been there at all! The overlooking of the possibility of one of Paiga's caste having heard of the stratagem was the second of the Thanadar's mistakes.

A wave of fury swept over the pig-tender—not only on account of the treatment he had received, but also because he recognised that he had fallen into the trap, and had directed the attention of his persecutors to the faquir. For, after the failure of his explorations in the grove, he had felt pretty sure that Balkishen had left his treasure with that individual, and the suspicions of the villagers that he had been mauled by him were perfectly correct. He had first visited the holy man and endeavoured to engage him in some useful conversation, and

after being rudely repulsed, had, on a second occasion, been surprised by the owner while rummaging about in his hut, and had then been knocked down senseless; and his body had been carried away and thrown down in the road where it had been found. He had always, however, intended to have the booty somehow—but now it would fall into the hands of the police! He was furious at the thought. There was still time, however, to secure revenge by thwarting the latter, and also an off-chance of obtaining a liberal reward by warning the faquir. His mind was rapidly made up, and the first gleam of daylight saw him running like a greyhound across country in a bee-line for Nand Kishore's orchard. He knew his way quite well, for he had recognised, on coming into the open, that the stable was a building attached to a ruined planter's bungalow; the size and design of which denoted both the opulence and peculiar notions regarding domestic arrangements, which had characterised the long dead-and-gone owner. In a couple of hours he reached his destination. The faquir, nearly naked, was squatting before a small fire in front of his hut abstractedly counting the beads of his rosary, with eyes fixed on the ground. "Holy one," panted Paiga, throwing himself down in front of him, "this poor one comes to tell you the police have discovered where Balkishen's treasure is, and will be here directly." Not a sound indicated the slightest interest in his communication on the

part of the recluse. All he did was to place the long iron pincers with a ring at the top, which for some reason all men of his profession carry, into the fire before him. "Listen, holy one," continued Paiga—and he rapidly related all that had passed at the stable; at the same time displaying the piece of calf's skin which he had brought with him. The holy man glanced at it carelessly, and then suddenly starting to his feet, snatched the red-hot pincers from the fire. "Foulest of liars," he roared, "begone." Paiga, greatly surprised at the nature of the reception of his warning, incontinently fled.

It is a week's journey from Islamabad to Hardwar, and two days later, as had been foreseen, the faquir, hauling down his ragged flag, tying his mat and antelope skin on his back, and carrying his pincers in his hand, sauntered off in the direction of the sacred bathing-place; halting, however, for a few moments to unearth a small leathern bag, apparently containing small stones, from beneath a castor-oil tree growing in the jungle a little way off the main road. He had been perfectly aware of the extent of the pig-tender's knowledge, but in view of the possibility of his giving information, had not had the slightest intention of allowing anything to be found in his possession. He had informed his followers that he was going to pay his devotions at Hardwar, and subsequently at Badrinarain; and that whether he returned or not would be according to the will of the Great Gods.

But he did not go more than one day's journey in the direction indicated; wandering away and completely disappearing in the mystery which surrounds the thoughts and movements of the great body of itinerant mendicants in India. Nothing more was ever seen or heard of him in Islamabad again. But six months later, some one very like him but grown very corpulent, might have been observed in a distant town, encamped under a tree in the garden of one Bisheshar Dyal, who had been formerly known as Balkishen. For some curious ethical reasons of his own, the faquir had been faithful to his trust.

The Thanadar speedily heard of the Bairagi's departure, and the very next day after he left, two men dressed as coolies and apparently sent by the owner to restore the orchard to its original order, appeared upon the scene, and, among other improvements, removed all traces of the recluse's recent abiding-place, and even dug down some distance into its site. But the only thing they came across was a piece of calf's skin, seared apparently with some hot implement — the unearthing of which caused both labourers to pause and look at one another. Two Englishmen, under the circumstances, would probably have burst out laughing, but the discovery did not seem to strike either of the diggers as in any way amusing, but rather the reverse. It is fortunate, perhaps, that the vengeance of Allah has probably very little effect on Hindus.

This is all that is known concerning the devious ways of Balkishen and his acquaintances. As to poor Paiga, a few months later he received a mysterious offer of a post as watchman in a distant village. Reviewing thé circumstances of his past life, he failed to recall any incident which would account for such an indication of approval and confidence, and he presently came to the conclusion (probably correctly) that it meant that his further presence in the neighbourhood of Islamabad was, for some reason, not desired. He wisely accepted the appointment and left.

In conclusion, it should be stated that the archives of the criminal investigation department in the locality contain no reference to any of the incidents related—so perhaps they never occurred. But they form the subject of one of the favourite stories of a grizzled old police pensioner, Surfaraz Khan by name, when he sits with his friends in the evening under the peepul-tree in his village, smoking his long country pipe, and narrating the experiences of his early days. He attributes the failure of the enterprise partly to the villainy of the faquir, but more particularly to the foolish leniency displayed in the examination and interrogation of the low-caste man Paiga; opining that if they had been more strenuously conducted, they should have led to the recovery of the "mahajun's" treasure, and its equitable distribution among his creditors. With which supposition his hearers, with some mental reservations, politely agree.

XII.

THE HOLY LAND OF THE HINDUS.

Some devotees, indeed large numbers, after worshipping at Hardwar, pass on from thence to perform the pilgrimage to the very sacred shrines of Kedarnath and Badrinath in the Himalayan mountains among the eternal snows, the Himachul of the Ramayana; and even to the distant lake Mansarowar and the holy mountain Kailas. The temptation to do so is very great, for "as the dew is dried up by the morning sun, so are the sins of mankind dried up at the sight of Himachul." He who drinks of the lake of Mansarowar, "its waters are like pearls," goes direct to the heaven of Shiva "released from the sins of a thousand births"; and he who bathes there, to the paradise of Brahma. In bygone days when official life was less strenuous, and when it was at once humiliating and comfortable for the young officer to recognise that his temporary disappearance would be probably unnoticed, the writer in the course of his duties has wandered with these pilgrims into the Holy Land; visiting the shrines and the passes leading to the

Bhot, the borderland inhabited by the Bhotias, and beyond this to the mysterious Hundès, "the roof of the world" or Tibet proper. Our party consisted of Durga Dutt, an official subordinate; Hari Dutt, an English-speaking Indian doctor; Bhowan Singh, an old and trusted Rajpoot orderly; a Mahommedan cook; a stout unshod Bhotia pony named "Punch"; and a yellow dog of uncertain parentage called "Génda,"—all born and bred in the hills. We marched very lightly; with one Cabul tent weighing 80 lbs., and a little camp furniture such as a bed and chair, a lighter shelter for the followers, guns and rifles, a very unpretentious wardrobe, certain European stores and tinned provisions, a few medicines, and Carlyle's 'Sartor Resartus' (a portable and satisfying form of literature),—the smaller articles all carried in wicker baskets covered with skins, and borne on the backs of hillmen engaged as we went along at the villages adjacent to our halting-places. On these hill expeditions the great essentials as regards clothing are well-fitting strong boots, warm comfortable slippers, and loose easy garments; anything tight is to be condemned, and knickerbockers and stockings or breeches and gaiters are quite out of place when climbing the mountain roads and tracks. Special native shoes made of "sambhur" leather for moving on the slippery grass hillsides, a good sun-hat, a cap, flannel shirts, a khaki drill suit for the valleys, a good Afghan "poshteen" (a skin coat with the long

hair inside) for the colder heights, and a pair of "putties" (flannel leg bandages), are also all necessaries in the outfit. We did not take the regular pilgrim route which runs through the hot valleys and mostly follows the course of the Alakananda river and its tributaries, for the surroundings of the halting-places are commonly foul and offensive to a dangerous extent, but so far as possible we used the tracks on the higher hills, following the watersheds, and only descending into the valleys when the proceeding was compulsory. This, however, was often the case in order to follow the road, and herein lies the great risk to health when mountaineering in these regions; for very few constitutions can stand the extraordinary changes in temperature and atmospheric pressure involved in camping one night in a steamy hot valley or on the banks of a river, and shivering next night in a tent pitched at an elevation where the thermometer drops to well below freezing-point;—and if one does fall ill in these wild surroundings so far from help, matters are likely to go hard with you. The writer shudders now to think of a week once passed in a little tent away in these wilds when prostrated with dysentery; the rain and sleet falling all the time, and the only water available for drinking, thick with mud and micaceous *débris.* Nothing probably saved his life but a long forced and horrible ride to a little rest-house, and the burglarious breaking open there of a district

official's little "cache" of sago, brandy, and medicines!

Our line of march for the first few days took us through the forests and clearings of the notorious Tarai, with its water-table nearly at the surface of the ground; covered with lofty trees, immense creepers, huge clumps of bamboos, very high grass and jungle, and teeming with wild animals. It is a paradise to the sportsman, but a name of dread to others. At the time that we passed through it, it was fairly healthy, but at certain periods of the year it is almost uninhabitable on account of the amount and severity of the malaria. Indeed there are many areas which have been abandoned as too deadly by all except the Tharoos—a strange, wild race with its own pretentious traditions, which seems to be more or less immune to the disease. They live in huts of a peculiar construction with long projecting eaves, and keep their drinking-water in separate buildings away from the dwelling hut—covering the fluid in the vessels with a cloth. This is interesting in connection with the mosquito theory regarding the cause of malaria. There is nothing peculiar about their diet, but report says they are very fond of strong drink when they can get it. It is a half-wild people concerning which not very much is known except to Forest Officers.

Leaving this swampy tract of country with its herds of wild elephants, its tigers, spotted deer, hog deer, &c., we pushed on through the Bhaber,

—a curious area, geologically speaking, since it is composed of boulders and *débris* brought down by rivers and streams from the mountains to the north, and spread over the low-lying land round the base of the foothills like an apron; and from whence the long valleys pass up between the spurs into the Himalayas above. Few wells are found here, on account of the formation, and the tract has been largely supplied with canals fed by natural lakes in the neighbouring hills. These canals were constructed by a former Commissioner, General Sir Henry Ramsay, for, originally covered with vast and impenetrable forests then of little value, large clearings were made by his efforts for the growth of corn and other cereals requiring irrigation. The experiment serves to illustrate the fluctuations of supply and demand; for times have changed, and with the increased requirements for timber for railway sleepers, &c., and the reduced value of grain, it is doubtful now whether the alteration was worth the money it cost. The reclaimed areas are cultivated by hillmen attracted by low rents, who retire to the hills on the approach of the rainy season.

In both these tracts are large Government forests managed by officials of the Indian Forest Department. This valuable organisation has done much good work. Formerly there were great areas of forests, copse and waste belonging to the State in every province in India, and but little attempt had been made either to prevent wasteful

destruction of forests, to promote reproduction, or to secure supplies of timber, firewood, and other forest products for the use of future generations. But now trained officers have been appointed, laws enacted, over 92,000 square miles of State forests have been marked off as reserves which are to be husbanded and managed as public properties for the benefit of the country at large and of the people living in their vicinity. Fire has been excluded from these forests; systematic working for timber, for firewood and other purposes has been introduced; tribal or other rights or claims in the forest reserves have been brought up and adjusted, and plantation and reproduction of timber and firewood are being scientifically conducted.[1] The only serious source of friction between the officials and the people is as regards the grazing of cattle in the jungles, but this is usually easily got over, and in times of stress, as in a famine, such tracts are thrown open for the use of all. The net forest revenue, after paying all charges for forest conservancy and working, now averages more than £800,000 annually.

It was the privilege of the writer to serve under, and sit at the feet of, that great administrator the Commissioner referred to above, who was said to know every man in Kumaon, and concerning whom many stories are told to this day. Like Havelock, he was a wise God-fearing gentle-

[1] 'Memorandum on some of the Results of Indian Administration during the past Fifty Years of British Rule in India.'

man, modest in demeanour, simple in tastes, and brave as a lion. When tidings of the outbreak of the Mutiny reached him, he was some hundred miles away from his headquarters and in a very wild and inaccessible part of the hills. A few hours sufficed for his arrangements, which included the laying out of relays of ponies on the road by villagers warned of his advent by native runners. When he started, he merely told his groom "Bachi" holding his horse, his destination, and added, "Get there as soon as you can." Riding day and night, almost continuously, he reached his headquarters in an incredibly short space of time, and when he arrived, there was "Bachi," who had used the tracks known only to the hillmen, standing ready to take his horse! He only said, "Hulloa, Bachi!" and there and then promoted him to a post beyond a servant's wildest dreams. History does not say how "Bachi" got on in his new appointment—probably badly,—but the incident was just the sort of one that appeals to the Oriental mind. The mutineers reached the foot of the hills, but never invaded Sir Henry's domains, firmly held in his strong hands. It is related, though with what truth the author cannot say, that secret information having reached him of the coming of a certain incendiary leader sent by the mutineers to excite disaffection among the Goorkha troops, he rode down the hill, met the disguised man, identified him, and blew out his brains on the spot!

These were times when strenuous action was called for: when men had to take their courage in both hands; and when sudden swift blows, like Napoleon's "whiff of grape-shot," were really most merciful.

Presently we reached the foot hills, and were among that marvellous collection of wonders known as the Himalayas, "the place of snow." They consist of ranges, isolated elevations and giant mountains, intersected by water channels—sometimes large rivers, sometimes tributaries of smaller size, and sometimes merely mountain streams, torrents, and cascades—all, however, rapid and tumultuous, tearing their way through defiles, ravines, and valleys in their passage to the plains below. It has been stated that in the whole expanse of these mountain regions, including Tehri-Garhwal, British Garhwal, and Kumaon, there is no area in a valley sufficiently large to manœuvre a brigade of infantry. No picture can suggest, no pen describe, the wonderful grandeur and beauty of these hills, replete with Nature's greatest and most imposing marvels; and every turn of the hill-paths winding amongst them, and every summit gained, open up a new prospect of wild sublimity. Standing upon some lofty summit, the eye is wellnigh paralyzed by the vision of the immensity and variety of the natural phenomena presented: it is a very sea of mountains and ranges, broken up into a thousand billows flowing to all points of the compass,

uniting, dividing, and following straight lines, partial circles, and endless entanglements of mighty elevations. Some of them are covered with dense forests, others with only grass; while here and there are the frowning scarps of immense and rugged rocks. Occasionally also may be seen a vast furrow on the side of a mountain, like a wedge cut out of a gigantic cake, marking the site of one of the great landslips so frequent in these tracts. Many years ago, the author had established a small field isolation hospital for Indian patients during an epidemic of cholera in a hill station. It was situated on a little plateau close to a ravine. One of those heavy rainfalls (several inches in a day) which happen at intervals during the monsoon, occurred just afterwards, and as soon as journeying was possible, he and the Commissioner managed to get down the hill to inspect the place. The whole collection of huts, the plateau, the staff, and the patients had all disappeared, and were never seen or heard of again. Sometimes an area which would constitute a fair-sized English estate will suddenly detach itself from a mountain and subside into the valley below, altering the whole aspect of the countryside. The author remembers such an incident when a portion of the slip, a piece of forest land some two acres in extent, slid down a thousand feet *en masse* — the trees still standing almost upright upon it. A European and some native servants watched the fall

from the other side of a deep ravine, but, miscalculating its extent, the whole vast mass of earth surged across the depression, and he and his companions were overwhelmed and buried many feet deep. On this occasion a large wooden bridge, and a hut full of native travellers close by, were all swept away—the only survivor being an old woman who clung to the fragments of the bridge and was miraculously rescued uninjured some miles lower down in the torrent! There are many still alive who recollect the terrible landslip at Naini Tal in 1880.

Their depth renders most of the valleys invisible, but their situation is disclosed by the white mist rising from below and condensed in its passage upwards, and in early autumn the solidity of this produces the weirdest and most striking effects—the clouds lying among the hills resembling a wild sea of breakers roaring between the watersheds, or spread out, like a field of snow, from range to range. The writer has been a wanderer in many lands, but can call to mind nothing more wonderful and impressive than some of these spectacular effects of condensed vapour in the Himalayas. It is given to few to see them in perfection; for they are only visible in autumn, and then only in the early mornings before they melt away under the influence of the increasing power of the sun as it rises above the horizon.

And what shall be said of the Eternal Snows to the north of this maze of mountains? In the

Ramayana we read, "in a hundred ages of the Gods I could not tell thee of the glories of Himachul." Quoting from Mr Sherring, "In the small space reaching from Nepal in the east to the native state of Tehri in the west, and of a breadth of 30 miles along the Tibetan border, there are grouped mountains which collectively can find no comparison in any part of the globe. In this small space there must be some 80 peaks of 20,000 feet and over, and studded in the midst, like diamonds among pearls, are some of the highest mountains in the world."[1] Nanda Devi stands 25,689 feet above the sea—the Trisul range connected with this is nowhere less than 20,000; and close by Nanda Kot 22,530—to the north-west we have Dunagiri 23,184—on the east the Panch Chuli ranging up to 22,661—and to the east and north several other peaks ranging from 20,754 up to 23,220 feet. Nanda Devi is the loftiest mountain in the British Empire. The perpetual snow-line here stands at something like 16,000—that is, approximately, the height of Mont Blanc. Truly a fitting home for the Great Gods, and it is little wonder that tradition and legend should cluster round their mighty heads!

The regular hill-paths wander among the mountains and have necessitated no inconsiderable engineering skill in their construction; winding, as they do, round spurs, or zigzagging up the more elevated hills and peaks so as to avoid any

[1] 'Western Tibet and the British Borderland.'



The Himalayas, from a lofty peak, showing cloud effects in valleys.

excessively steep gradient. Sometimes the path is broad, and running over grass or through a forest; and at others narrow, and cut out of the face of a cliff with only a low stone parapet wall to save the traveller from plunging down a precipice a thousand feet below. Here and there a waterfall of marvellous beauty dashes down the hillside and roars away below the little stone bridge over which the road passes; sometimes the way will lie through a tract covered with tall conifers where the foot sinks into a bed of fallen pine needles; or again the path will cross a fertile valley, green with the cereal and millet crops amid which the little villages nestle. There is infinite variety, and an ordinary day's journey will often bring the wayfarer into relation with the conditions of climate, fauna, and flora peculiar to elevations of from four to ten thousand feet. The hillsides and the banks are gay with wild flowers and plants of every variety and description and afford an endless source of interest to the botanist, while the glimpses of wild creatures, strange birds, and gorgeous butterflies delight the soul of the naturalist.

Our system of marching was as follows. At daybreak we rose, and, after a hurried toilet, the tents were struck and they, together with the other impedimenta, placed on the backs of hill-coolies and started off. The camping spots selected were usually about ten miles apart, and half-way we halted and the cook prepared our breakfast.

Here we enjoyed a smoke, a little rest and botanising or shooting; during which interval the baggage would have passed us and got well ahead. Then the balance of the march was completed, villages inspected *en route*, tents got up, dinner prepared, letters (not many) and diary written, and, as old Pepys would say, "and so to bed." All asleep by 9.30. Thus, usually riding up the hills and walking on the flat or on a decline, we wandered on, a shabby-looking crew, from day to day; Durga Dutt often lightening the tedium of the march by the recital of strange tales and legends of the land. One, the writer remembers, concerns the fact that occasionally a ram is born in the villages with four horns, and is thereby recognised as a suitable offering to the gods. If the animal be turned loose, it invariably wanders, it is averred, towards and up the slopes of the great mountain Nanda Devi; many of the country people following it for days and weeks, marching or halting as the ram is disposed to do. When it has reached a certain height "the air becomes poisonous"—that is, too rarefied to allow of any further ascent—and the people camp and wait; but the animal proceeds higher and higher, until after some days its head rolls down among them and they know the sacrifice is accepted. Now the strange thing is that the story runs that certain of these followers of the ram have seen on the upper slopes of this lofty mountain the skulls and bones of men of great stature, which

have become petrified, or otherwise preserved from decay, by the rigour of the climate. The explanation assigned is that in long past times the Rajah of Kanouj in the plains, the greatest potentate of that period, became so inflated with pride and vanity that he demanded the hand of the daughter of the deity who reigns on the mountain, in marriage. Apparently, however, the alliance did not commend itself to her father and was declined; whereupon the Rajah moved an immense army into the hills. The mighty host climbed the great peak to the attack, but the god poisoned the air, "so that they were all dead men," and their bones are there to this day, "to witness if I lie."

So far Durga Dutt, but the writer has never met any one who has actually seen the bones, nor is there any evidence beyond tradition that they exist. But Quatrefages, if the author's memory serves, mentions the slopes of the Himalayas as the most likely places to find remains of the Aryan people who crossed them on their way into Hindustan; though most authorities surmise that the course they took was from Bactria over the Hindu Khush and down the Kabul river until they crossed the Indus. Still there might have been outlying parties, or hapless wanderers into the unknown. The size of the bones is of course the natural exaggeration common to all legends.

Durga Dutt is a respectable shrewd man and very careful in his observance of religious cere-

monies, but he appears to place a strange limitation to the intelligence of the powers that be. It seems that after his marriage, a holy man predicted that he would never have a son grow up, and as a matter of fact his first two boys died in infancy. He and his wife then took counsel together, and when the third was born, he was given a girl's name and dressed like one, and his hair permitted to grow down his back. This stratagem, it must be confessed, has up to the present time been successful, and the little lad was for some time with us on our journeys. The anecdote will sound strange to many ; but, indeed, the mental attitude of the common people towards the minor godlets and holy men is extremely confusing and difficult to follow, and as regards Hindu mythology in general, the average European in India knows very little about it.

It would require a volume to describe the varied vegetation. Among the trees are the sal, the oak, the "toon," wild cherry and pear, walnut, chestnut, sycamore, holly, ilex, hill bamboo, &c., &c. ;— whole forests of the rhododendron, here a tree and not a shrub, and sometimes, in the spring, covering a vast hillside with a blaze of colour passing from red below to faint pink above—and pervading all, the great tribe of conifers. The last vary as different heights are reached, and are found in fairly well defined bands at different elevations ; the "chir" pine below, and then through firs, spruces, yews, larches, cypresses, and others up to

the great cedar, the *Cedrus deodara*. And of the birds the name is legion; from the fairy humming birds and honey-suckers up to the eagle, raven, lammergeyer, the magnificent "monaul" or Impeyan pheasant (*Lophophorus Impeyanus*), the "lungi" or Hastings Tragopan (*Ceriornis melanocephala*), known to others than ornithologists as the Argus pheasant, the "chukor" partridge, and many others.

The Hastings Tragopan is a beautiful bird, but surely the Impeyan pheasant is one of the most magnificent that flies. Here is how Jerdon describes the male: "Head with the crest and throat bright metallic green; back of the neck brilliant iridescent purple, passing into bronzy green, and all with a golden gloss; upper part of the back and wing coverts, rump, and upper tail coverts, richly glossed with purple and green, the latter colour prevailing on the wings and further tail coverts, and the purple on the back and rump; middle of the back white; quills black; tail cinnamon rufous, the lower surface black; glossed on the throat with green and purple, dull and unglossed elsewhere. . . . Length 27 to 29 inches; extent 36; wing 11½ to 12; tail 8½. Weight 4½ lb." He is only found in the upper hills from 6000 feet up to the limits of the wooded regions; indeed the writer has never met him lower than 8000 feet. When, on being disturbed, he launches himself with a shrill screech down the mountain side, his brilliant metallic plumage against the dark foli-

age of the forest flashes across the eye like a meteor!

Besides the large pheasants mentioned, there are the "cheer" (*Phasianus Wallichii*), the "kalij" (*Gallophasis albocristatus*), the "koklas" (*Pucrasia macrolopha*), &c.,—all frequenting the dense forests and very difficult to bag. The pheasant, if we come to think of it, is one of the most incorrigible of vagabonds; for whereas fowls, turkeys, ducks, guinea-fowls, pigeons, and many other birds have become completely reclaimed and domesticated, the pheasant positively declines to become anything of the kind, and is, as he always has been, a denizen of the woods and forests. You may bring him up under a hen and offer him every inducement to remain at home, but he objects to setting up a domestic establishment, and as soon as he can is off to his original habitat, where, indeed, he only really thrives.

The chukor (*Caccabis chukor*) is a partridge very like an English "red leg," and affords excellent sport. The Afghans call him the "fire-eater," as he is said to peck at sparks of fire. This may very possibly be true, since graminivorous birds have the habit of picking up and swallowing any bright or particularly hard stones which serve to help the triturating process carried on in the gizzard. An officer in South Africa told the writer that when travelling among the native tribes in that country, he always adopted the practice of the people and cut open these organs

in the fowls he purchased for food, and that on one occasion he found in one a diamond of considerable value. He had a cutting from a Cape newspaper relating the incident. Many of our English birds like the cuckoo, jay, or blackbird, or their first cousins, inhabit these hills, and greet us like friends in a far land. It was the breeding time as we passed through, so all birds were spared.

Then the fauna includes the tiger, bear, leopard, wild mountain sheep and goats, the sambhur, and numerous Cervidæ, including the little musk-deer with its brittle hair, wild dogs, great grey monkeys or "lungoors," martens, &c., &c. We saw them but seldom, though the little "kakar" or barking deer, probably yielding the best venison in India, sometimes came to the pot.

Tigers are not often found far into the hills—indeed, it is doubtful if a true hill tiger exists,—probably the stout heavy-legged animal one meets is a descendant of a Tarai or Bhaber tiger, which has wandered into the mountains and become modified in structure by its environment. Sometimes they become great terrors to the neighbourhood in which they have settled, and the author remembers a man-eater that practically closed a main road for months; destroying many people, including the native runner with his spear festooned with bells, who represented His Majesty's mail. Indeed, so bad were his ravages, that a company of Goorkhas — most fearless of

men and desperate of poachers—were sent out to clear the hill, but without success, and it was eventually poisoned by a native "shikari" or hunter, who put a ball into the carcase to save appearances before bringing in the skin to claim the reward. It was a handsome well-fed beast, not at all resembling the mangy old creatures which more generally take to man-eating in the plains, when their age prevents them catching more agile prey. The black Himalayan bear is a dangerous brute, sometimes attacking folk, especially women, without any provocation. The hillman has no words sufficiently bad for him, and there is no villainy or vice not attributed to him; especially when he first comes down into the valleys after his long hibernation in caves up in the mountains. As in other parts of India, he is charged with paying dishonourable attentions to village maidens whom he may encounter, but the present writer, while holding no brief for "bhaloo," must acquit him of this accusation; the origin of which offers a field for considerable and uncharitable conjecture. Normally subsisting on roots, wild honey, &c., these animals are occasionally carnivorous, and the writer knows an instance of one of them digging up a corpse and devouring it.

Hari Dutt, the melancholy, and not particularly courageous, Indian doctor, had an unintentionally comic story of a bear—best told in his own words. "When your servant was at the dispensary at——,

there was a little low hut behind the building upon which Buddhoo the cook, by permission, grew pumpkins. They were very fine pumpkins, and Buddhoo was a good man and gave us many of them. But one day he came and said that thieves were taking them by night, and that he had heard one in the darkness on the roof of the hut. So Buddhoo the cook, and Sarju the watchman, and another friend and your slave, resolved to capture the thief, and we settled it that when Buddhoo heard him on the roof we should rush in on all sides and catch him. And that very night Buddhoo called us, and, as arranged, we gave a great shout and all rushed in from every side. Woof—woof—a great 'bhaloo'!" (bear). A long pause. "And what happened?" we asked. The dejected Hari Dutt heaved a deep sigh. "God knows! we went away from there," he replied sadly.

Leopards are numerous in the hills, but here, as a rule, they are cowardly animals. It happened to the writer at one camp to be aroused at night by a low purring sound proceeding from an animal wandering round the tent. Génda, the dog, lay on the floor shivering and paralyzed with fright. The loaded rifle was under the bed, but what if, on stepping out into the darkness, one should come face to face with the beast? It had been a long and tiring march, and while cogitating what to do, the writer fell asleep. In the morning the "pugs," or footprints, of a large leopard were found round the tent; it had evidently smelt out

the dog, and was perhaps rather curious about the strange appearance of the little 80-lb. tent.

Panthers (the difference between which and large leopards the writer has never been able to clearly make out) are not so common as in the jungles in the plains and in Central India. In the latter localities they sometimes take to man-eating without the excuse of the old tiger,[1] and are very dangerous. Unlike the latter, panthers and leopards will sometimes revisit "kills" for several nights in succession, but there is no telling how these animals will act or whether they will ever come back at all.

That fine deer the "sambhur," here known as the "jerow," is found, and sometimes carries a large head. The "ghural" frequents the grassy and almost inaccessible spots on the hillsides, where "thar," or mountain-goats, may also be met with. Away to the north the "burhel" (*Ovis wahura*) is occasionally shot. "Ghural" and "thar" affect the most awful places — the slippery grass-clad hillside, very likely terminating in a precipice with a fall of a thousand feet, where a false step means almost certain death. More than once the writer has had to forgo a shot at these animals when, at the critical moment, it was necessary to hang on by tooth and nail to the side of the slope, and discard the useless rifle. Whether the game is worth the candle is an open

[1] Captain Glasfurd thinks that young man-eating tigers and panthers are taught the practice by a depraved mother.

question,—certain it is that muscles and nerves must be at their very best when this form of sport is indulged in.

The Himalayans indeed have, as Jerdon says, a double fauna, unknown in the plains: the one is common to these mountains and to the hilly regions of Assam and Burmah; and the other, in the higher portions of the range, is common to them with Tibet and Northern Asia. It is very varied and extensive, and many species, of birds especially, have hitherto been found nowhere else.

The mass of the people in Kumaon and Garhwal are said by Mr Sherring to belong to the Khasia race, speaking a dialect of Hindi closely related to the language of Rajputana, and to be probably of Aryan origin. The impression created is that the population consists of a great number of subdivisions of the Brahman caste, a certain proportion of "bunneahs" or shopkeepers, and the low-caste people called Dūms. They are, except in the northern portion of Garhwal, of somewhat poor physique, timid, fairly intelligent, but, when educated, much given to intrigue. The great bulk of the people, however, is steeped in ignorance. The women are frequently pleasing in appearance, and, as Kipling says, if a hill woman is pretty, she is often very pretty indeed; but, except among the better caste people, few of them are in any way cultured, and they are low in the intellectual scale. There is a clan inhabiting a few villages

in the hills, among whom all the girls born are devoted to a life of immorality; the men cultivating the land and seeking the wives from other villages. The women are quiet and well mannered and go far afield; often living under the protection of rajahs and others in the plains. They frequently amass considerable wealth, and on returning to their homes in later life, sometimes devote a portion of this to the erection of rest-houses for travellers, and even to the building of temples.

Hill-folk, as found in the villages, have many pleasant characteristics, and their cheery laugh and open smiling countenances impress one very favourably after the reserved demeanour of the residents in the plains. The lower classes are extremely superstitious, and every pass and hill has its local spirit to which offerings are made in the form of little fragments of clothing hung on the boughs of the trees. The dead are burnt, and, it is said, when from any cause the body of the deceased person cannot be recovered, they make an image of grass of the dead and cremate it with the usual ceremonies—otherwise the soul would assuredly go to hell. As Hinduism demands, a pitcher from which water can fall in drops to quench the thirst of the small spirit of the departed (about the size of a man's thumb) is hung from a peepul-tree. The material nature of the soul is a very old and curious belief. Plato called it "the child within"; Aristotle says it is

"small in size"; and Buddhists describe it as "like a grain of corn."

Animism always forms part of a crude religion; the early Greek philosophers believed trees had souls, and the rustling of the leaves of the sacred oak of Zeus at Dodona was interpreted as the voice of the god. These spirits are reputed to be terrible tale-bearers, repeating mischievous stories they have heard to other persons who come to sit under the trees. It was the writer's misfortune once to fall foul of one of them when touring on another occasion in the Himalayas with a friend. We had marched away from civilisation for about a week, and found ourselves one morning on a small plateau some 8000 feet above the plains. Our servants had preceded us, and on our arrival we found the breakfast being prepared by our stolid Mahommedan cook under a peepul-tree; so that we were not surprised when the headman of the village, a Hindu, very respectfully drew our attention to the situation of the cooking arrangements, and requested that they might be removed elsewhere. "For most certainly," said he, "if this thing be permitted, the god will be enraged and great trouble will fall upon us, and even, it may be, upon the sacred persons of the 'sahibs' themselves." However, we were very hungry, breakfast was just ready, and we dismissed the old man with a promise to put out our fire and vacate the spot in half an hour; which was accordingly done. That was one of the best meals we ever ate, but it

was to be the last for three days; for our pipes were hardly lit after its termination, before we became aware of some great atmospheric disturbance occurring below us in the plains. We were ourselves sitting under a cloudless sky, in perfect peace and content, in a scene of marvellous sylvan beauty. Thousands of feet beneath us raged a terrible storm, long remembered in that part of India, and which almost wrecked a town of considerable importance. Presently we saw that it was advancing upon us, and up the hills. It was a wonderful sight, for the clouds, black as ink, but lighted up at intervals by flashes of brilliant lightning, lay below us, and we looked down upon their threatening approach. However, it was no time for admiration; tents were hurriedly run up with double pegs for the ropes, trenches dug round them, and everything got under cover. The ponies and grooms were placed in an ancient stone shanty known as a "dharamsala" and built for the accommodation of native travellers, which was erected on the little plateau. The thunder became louder and louder, the lightning more constant and vivid, and before long the tempest was upon us. In half an hour one tent was wrecked, and the shelters, constructed of leafy boughs, which the villagers had put up for the servants, were all blown away. The rain fell in torrents; we were fifteen miles away from any available building, so that there was nothing to do but to stick it out. For three days and nights that storm raged with

little intervals of abeyance. Luckily a small Kashmir tent stood, which we shared together. But lighting a fire was impossible, and we subsisted on cheese and biscuits and what could be eaten raw, abstracted from the baggage at intervals when slight abatements of the weather occurred. The ground was flooded, a cold wind howled, and the miserable servants struggled on, crouched in a sort of shelter made out of the ruins of the wrecked tent. As usual with Indian domestics, there was no complaining or grumbling among them, but it was a wretched time, and on the third evening we had a council of war, and determined to abandon the camp and to strike out for a traveller's bungalow, some fifteen miles away, next morning. And this we did, and on the way there the sun came out, and when we reached our destination the weather was perfect.

Now the incident would not be worth relating but for subsequent events. It so fell out that, years afterwards, the writer revisited the spot, and his companion this time was another officer, and the servants had all been changed. On arrival at the camp, just the same thing occurred as on the first occasion. There was the cooking going on under the sacred peepul; there was the protesting headman; and again we finished our breakfast and put out our fire. The old shanty, with its roof of stone slabs, still stood there as it had probably done for fifty years, and, as before, the ponies were stabled in it. It was a quiet, calm day, with-

out a leaf stirring, when suddenly, without the least warning, the whole roof fell in, and cries and shrieks from the grooms rang out! We all turned to, and after a good deal of work, managed to extract the men and ponies from the ruins. All were more or less crippled, and it was obvious that it would be weeks before they were fit to march—so there we were stranded, some sixty miles from fresh mounts! To our old native friend the case was quite clear; the god was seriously annoyed, our "kismet" was bad, and this time the servants were obviously frightened; so next morning we trudged down the hill to another camp, leaving the men and ponies in charge of the villagers. We had hardly reached this before the writer's friend was down with severe fever, and, to make a long story short, had to be taken back to a settlement, carried on a native bedstead.

This is the tale for what it is worth. Of course the weak point is that the culpable cooks escaped with absolute immunity, but there is little doubt that the local god in the peepul-tree enjoyed a great enhancement of respect in the neighbourhood as the result of our disasters, and the traveller who visited the spot would be told the story with due solemnity!

In old days, before our occupation of Kumaon (the portion of the hill tracts marching with Nepal), the hardy inhabitants of the latter country were in the habit of crossing the border and carrying into slavery what number of Kumaonis they

required for any particular purpose. An old record mentions that the commission paid per head for each captured man was about a shilling—which does not point to a determined resistance on the part of the invaded. Yet the demeanour towards Europeans to-day of this race of heroes, when once educated, is probably more objectionable than that of any other people outside the great towns, and few prate more loudly about liberty and self-government. Not, however, before Goorkhas; the respect entertained by these brave, sturdy little men for the Kumaoni, is about equal to that felt by the Sikh for the Bengali.

They wear, as a rule, small cloth caps, and blankets folded across the chest in a peculiar manner and fastened with a long skewer-like pin; going, as is the Indian custom, usually barefoot. They live in little villages, situated sometimes in the valleys, and sometimes on ledges of rock on the hill-sides, seeming almost to adhere to the face of the mountain itself, in huts walled and roofed with slabs of stone. They are, when seen close, mostly wretched little settlements and extremely dirty, and the common practice is to house the cattle on the bottom floor and for the people themselves to crowd together in small unventilated rooms in the upper storey. In the neighbourhood of the villages are the cultivated fields, either lying in the low lands, or stretched up the mountain sides on little terraces laboriously levelled and held up by rough retaining walls.

They are very picturesque both as regards their position and the character of their produce, for the lighter green and yellow of the crops relieve the darker and more sombre colours of the woodland, while the deep crimson amaranth (*Amaranthus caudatus*) with its magnificent plumes sometimes six feet in height and sown among, or on the borders of, the green cereals, adds a great deal to the beauty of the landscape. The principal food-stuffs grown are the "mandua" (*Eleusine coracana*), growing some three feet high, and resembling an erect grass with the seed carried in a head consisting of rather bushy spikes standing erect on the stem. The yield is heavy, but it is a coarse and unpalatable grain. Climbing about the dwellings are various kinds of gourds, pumpkins, cucumbers, and melons, charitably covering the same to some extent. Pulses are sown in the fields; the vetch (*Vicia sativa*), soy beans (*Glycine soja*), and many others; while rice is grown in the valleys and where irrigation is possible. The species of this grain in India are innumerable; there are at least a hundred in Upper India alone. There is spring, summer, autumn, and winter rice, of which the last is the most important crop. It is sometimes broadcasted, but it is more frequently transplanted from a nursery into the fields when the plants are something like a foot high, and the operation produces a great deal of employment to villagers, in the rainy season, all over the country.

Following the banks of the smaller streams, a pleasant, low, clattering sound sometimes reaches the ear, and presently the wayfarer comes upon a little artificial water-channel apparently terminating at a small, low stone building from whence the sound issues. This is a water-mill, where the grain is ground. The water channel commences sufficiently high up the stream to give the necessary fall, and the water is led down a shoot so as to impinge upon the blades of a vertical shaft connected with the revolving millstones above. A little hopper filled with grain is kept sufficiently agitated to automatically feed the mill, by the simple device of a short rod from the hopper passing over the grooved surface of the upper millstone, and being thereby jerked up and down. The whole arrangement is primitive in the extreme, but is wonderfully effective,—working by day and night if necessary, with very little attention.

In past times, before plague appeared in Bombay, a disease know as "mahamari" (the great disease) used to occasionally break out in these villages, and spread with alarming rapidity. Several investigations were made into the nature of the sickness, but those were pre-bacteriological days, and it has only recently been established that this was the plague with which we are only too familiar in the plains of India to-day. Special and excellent orders had been passed in former days for the arrest of these outbreaks, several of

which it has fallen to the lot of the writer to deal with. An unusual mortality among rats (and snakes) was the first intimation of trouble, and it was commonly found on arrival at the spot—usually some remote hamlet in the heart of the mountains — that the inhabitants had already evacuated the dwellings and were living in little structures made of boughs, in the jungles near. Isolation was complete, since the residents of the surrounding villages—they are very scattered—had at once cut off all personal communication with the infected people; even letters, supplies, and money being left on appointed rocks to be fetched by them. Proceedings were drastic—fire was set to the settlement and the whole burnt out—compensation being paid to the owners by the local authorities. A ghastly detail in the arrangements was the removal of the abandoned dead in the vacated huts, for no one would touch them, and the corpse had to be lassoed with ropes, dragged out to a suitable place such as a ravine, and then covered with stones thrown upon it from a distance! The villagers were kept in huts in the jungles for a month after the disease had ceased among them, and were then permitted to return to the ruins of their houses, which, however, a very little labour sufficed to repair. These measures were invariably successful, and indeed the experience was one of the reasons which induced the authorities to adopt such strenuous action when plague first appeared in the plains.

Naturally enough, when the disease first appeared in Bombay, suspicion was aroused that it had been transmitted from the hills, and a distinguished European savant, the late Professor Koch, visited the Himalayas, accompanied by the author, in connection with the matter. But these outbreaks of "mahamari" only appear at considerable intervals, and the only one which had occurred for some years previously had been in a village in the extreme north, and was subsequent to the appearance of the plague in Bombay. The theory was altogether untenable.

Plague is a very horrible disease, from which India of late years has suffered terribly, but although our efforts to mitigate its virulence and arrest its spread have been largely abortive, still we may be thankful that matters were not even worse. Descriptions of such epidemics in Europe in the past are appalling. The Black Death, which is the same disease, ravaged England in the fourteenth century, and this calamity was one of the most stupendous in its consequences that has ever occurred in history. The epidemic was awful in its severity, fully half of the population of England and Wales being swept away, and imagination can hardly conceive the desolation, terror, and utter disorganisation of both public and private life which attended it. Froissart tells us that fully a third of the whole population of Europe was destroyed; and in Paris alone 80,000 persons were fatally struck. Like cholera, it claimed a

large number of its victims from among the young and strong. The dead lay in heaps in the streets or in the deserted houses, with no one to bury them, and so deadly was the infection that once the disease entered a house there was no hope of escaping it.[1] Dr Gasquet tells us that "for many years the whole country bore witness to the terrible ordeal through which it had passed, and which had as disastrous an effect upon the morals as upon the material prosperity of the people." Yet, as the same author points out, this awful visitation proved "a turning-point in the national life. It formed the real close of the mediæval period and the beginning of the Modern Age." Such a large proportion of the labouring classes had disappeared that the survivors could dictate terms to their employers, serfdom disappeared, trade-unions were formed, and the lower orders became a powerful body of men, strong enough to wrest privileges by force from king and nobles. Religion also received a blow from which it did not recover for a long time, and this came about in a curious way. "So few priests had survived the plague that the bishops were forced to ordain mere boys, half-educated, and often wholly unfitted for the care of souls. The bad example set

[1] Sometimes the type was as bad as this in India. The writer remembers plague breaking out in a house containing thirteen people where, on account of the wife of the owner being about to be confined, the evacuation of the building was delayed for some days. Eleven out of the thirteen occupants died of the disease—one of the two survivors being the newly-born infant.

by many of these men, the frequent scandals and abuses in the Church, had a demoralising effect upon the people. At that time the seeds were sown that were to bear fruit in a future generation. There can be no doubt that the Black Death paved the way for the Reformation, as well as for a new order of things in the body politic."

Wending our way along, we met many types of people: the pilgrims from the plains already described elsewhere; the hardy Bhotia wrapped in blankets and dirty beyond description, driving his flock of goats carrying borax from Tibet in little saddle-bags on their backs, and slouching along in his woollen boots with string soles, invariably spinning wool into yarn by means of a falling spindle as he went; and on one occasion we had afternoon tea with a family party from Tibet itself; — a quaint entertainment, where the Lama who accompanied it showed us the use of the praying-wheel and flags, while we drank (or pretended to) a beverage composed of brick tea mixed with salt, and churned up with butter made from the milk of the yaks or "jibboos" (a cross between a yak and a cow) which they had with them. This tea has often a red colour, due to the leaf of a plant imbedded in the brick, and this has stimulating properties which possibly to some extent accounts for its popularity.

Every day had its own special and novel interest. Once we passed a tea plantation, appar-

ently abandoned, but we presently discovered that it was being carried on, more or less, by a Chinaman who had been originally engaged and brought there to look after and manage the place for a former English owner. The tea plant, which is an evergreen, grows in little bushes with flowers like those of the white wild rose, and the leaves are almost an inch and a half long, narrow, indented, and tapering to a point. These are picked when young at intervals, or when "flushes" or new growths occur, and are then dried and made into the tea of commerce in the factories. The industry does not seem to have prospered in these hills, and a good deal of money has been lost in the enterprise. The fact seems to be that the earlier planters (many of them retired officers and civil officials) thought too much of what climate would suit themselves, and too little of what would suit the tea, and they often settled in spots so far back in the mountains that the cost of carriage to the plains ate up most, if not all, of the profits. Those who have survived have devoted their attention of late years more particularly to the growing of fruit, especially apples and pears, and these can hardly be surpassed in quality and flavour anywhere; but of course there is the same difficulty here, the want of a steady and convenient market—and to be profitable, the orchards must be within reasonable distance of the railway at the foot of the hills.

A well-cultivated tea-garden, with its terraced

plots of bushes, its clean orderly factory, and the planter's comfortable bungalow, is a pretty sight, and the author has many pleasant memories of visits to their genial and hospitable owners. The situation is often very picturesque; the dwelling-house perhaps crowning a little isolated mountain peak. A tragic incident occurred in one such spot. It was a perfect day; the sky absolutely clear but for one small cloud which chanced to pass exactly over the peak. There was suddenly an awful crash, the people sitting in the front room of the house were blinded by a terrific flash, and, rushing out into the verandah, found the planter lying there stone dead. The little cloud sailed on, the sun shone steadily; there was no other atmospheric disturbance whatever. It was a veritable bolt from the blue.

Tea was introduced into India about 1834. It seems to have been first conveyed into England from China about 1810, by the Dutch East India Company, but was really brought into fashion by the Lords Arlington and Ossory. It is curious to note how many of our useful plants were introduced into our country by travelling noblemen and gentlemen in the old days. Of course it may be suggested that then only the wealthy could afford to travel, but the various natural products were not such as would come to the notice of rich men journeying for mere pleasure and amusement; they were mostly found in wild and inhospitable tracts of country often very dangerous to travel-

lers, and by no means the localities which would attract the modern millionaire, or the seeker after comfort and enjoyment. The learned Linacre brought the damask rose from Italy; Thomas, Lord Cromwell, enriched our gardens with three sorts of plums; Edward Grindal, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, carried home the medicinal plant the tamarisk; and the Carew family introduced oranges. The cherry orchards of Kent were first started near Sittingbourne by a gardener to Henry VIII., and the exact locality is still called "Newgardens," as the place where the new fruit was first grown. Lambarde, in the 'Perambulation of Kent,' writes, in his account of Teynham (near Sittingbourne): "Our honest patriote Richard Harrys (fruiterer to King Henrie the 8) planted by his great cost and rare industrie, the sweet Cherrie, the temperate Pipyn, and the golden Renate . . . about the year of our Lord Christ 1533." The word "cherry" is derived from "Cerasuntis," a city of Pontus, where it flourished.

Sir Walter Raleigh gave us tobacco and the potato; Sir Richard Weston, clover grass; Cardinal Pole, figs; and Speman, lime-trees. Mulberry-trees largely owe their cultivation to the fostering care of James I. "Cos" lettuces are so called because they came from the island of Cos; the peach, persicum, or "mala persica," because introduced from Persia; "pistachio" nuts is the Syrian name for the fruit. The chestnut or "castagna" is derived from Castagna in Magnesia.

Plums came mostly from Syria, and the damson is really the damascene, or Damascus plum.

There are no doubt many minerals in these hills, but the cost of transport to the plains below makes it difficult to say how far it would be profitable to work them. In former days the rajahs of the country mined and smelted metals, and away in the north the writer was shown the ruined foundations of a village on the side of a hill, which was said to have been once occupied by the explorers after a copper mine. The story runs that they had dug into the side of the mountain until the tunnel had almost reached the vein of metal, and on a certain day the last blows were to be struck to expose it—so with great rejoicing a large concourse of people, headed by a band of music, marched in for the purpose. But unfortunately it had been necessary to oust a faquir from the spot when the work commenced, and he had cursed the enterprise with the usual consequences. Suddenly the roof of the tunnel collapsed between the joyful explorers and the entrance, and all were entombed. For seven days and nights those left outside attempted to dig down to the unhappy people imprisoned below; guided by the sound of music which the miserable captives kept up to direct attention to the proper spot. Then all was silent; the dejected would-be rescuers fled, and the place was abandoned for ever. Needless to say, the spot is haunted.

A few natives may be seen on the banks of the

Alakananda "cradling" its sands in a primitive manner for a few specks of gold washed down from somewhere above, but the profits are very small.

Sometimes we descended into the valleys, for a portion of the duties of the author consisted in the inspection of the hospitals established along the pilgrims' route. These useful institutions owe their origin to one of the great administrators of the past already referred to, General Sir Henry Ramsay, "the King of Kumaon" as he was called, Commissioner of the whole of these hill tracts, who, observing the malversation of the wealth left by pious Hindus to the shrines of Badrinath and Kedarnath, devoted a portion of the income, with the consent of the religious authorities, to the erection and maintenance of these hospitals, and the construction of iron suspension-bridges and other conveniences for the health and comfort of the pilgrims. On the occasion of these descents into the valleys, good "mahseer" fishing was often obtained; though the sport was precarious, and a "spate" of cold water from above, or a clap of thunder, would send every fish like a stone to the bottom. The "mahseer" will take the fly, though in these parts live-bait and spoons are generally more attractive; it shows good sport, is very fair eating, and will sometimes run to a great size—even up to 70 lb. One of the best places is where a tributary, not originating from melted snow, joins the roaring torrent of a glacier-fed

river; a little way up the warmer stream from the junction is an excellent spot, and as the fish is pretty sure to make for the heavy water where he will certainly be lost, an exciting fight is likely to be the result.

A tale is told of an angler fishing from a rock in a river at the foot of these hills, who suddenly noticed a great shadow appear in the water below him, and looking round to ascertain the cause, became aware of a large wild elephant on the bank above, regarding him with considerable curiosity. The writer has fished at an outpost in the Afghan hills with a sentry with a loaded rifle behind him looking out for "snipers," with very mixed feelings; but it is doubtful if Izaak Walton himself would have enjoyed the gentle art when "shadowed" by a wild elephant, and the sportsman in this case slid down from his rock into the water, and, being a good swimmer, reached the other bank in safety! One almost thinks that some equally unpleasant incident must have occurred to Plutarch, who, as quoted by Robert Burton in that monument of erudition, the 'Anatomy of Melancholy,' speaks bitterly of angling as "a filthy, base, and illiberal employment, having neither wit nor perspicacity in it, nor worth the labour"!

There are also hill-trout which take the fly, to be caught in the smaller streams, but they are very poor imitations of our English fish.

Magnificent and imposing as is the scenery of

the mountain slopes and summits, perhaps that of the valleys equals it in charm. The deep swift rivers tear their way through them in their rapid descent — at one time swirling through a dark gorge between two hills, silent, and giving the impression of irresistible power; at another, broadening out to run more placidly between slopes of which the sides are clothed with a dense and varied umbrageous growth extending down to, and overhanging, the water itself; and here and there again, threading their silvery way through a great valley strewn with water-worn boulders, where the declivity is less and the stream wider and less rapid. In such a locality the angler finds pure delight. The river has probably split up into numerous small waterways, leaving little islands of sand and polished stones between them, and in some of the channels the current is swift and clear and comparatively shallow. The broken water at the tail of these runs is a favourite haunt of the "mahseer" lying in wait for small fish and other food swept down by the stream. In such a spot, on one glorious day, the writer and a friend brought to bank twenty-seven bright finny victims ranging from one up to five pounds. Every few casts resulted in a run.

There is no compromise about a "mahseer's" action; he is either on the feed or he is not. In the latter case nothing will tempt him, but in the former he is a very glutton, flinging himself on his

prey like a tiger. The bait with its gut trace describes a half circle as the current sweeps it out and down stream, and just when the angler is about to wind up for a fresh cast, there is a sudden tightening of the line, the rod bends nearly double, the reel hums merrily, and the struggle begins. The first rush of a good "mahseer" is worth experiencing, and he will probably fight to the last. The accepted idea is that he takes a minute a pound to kill; but although a twenty-pound fish may be landed in twenty minutes, it will take a good deal more than five minutes to kill a five-pound fish. The fly-fisher may look upon angling with live bait and spoons with a certain amount of contempt, but there is a good deal of skill required in the proceeding to make the lure work naturally, and produce a full creel. At all events, it is the most successful plan for these hill rivers and streams, and a day so spent with the fish on the feed, in the midst of these delightful and wild surroundings and on the margin of the bright sparkling stream rippling over its stony bed, is an experience not to be despised by the most scientific disciple of old Izaak.

Some years ago, a great landslip, common in these tracts, filled up the bed of one of the mountain torrents just where it tore its way through a deep gorge; and a huge lake of water formed behind the obstruction. It was evident that when the latter burst, dire disaster would befall the riparian villages below, and the Govern-

ment deputed a special engineer and his staff to the spot. He camped at the place, established field - telegraph stations at the settlements down the river, and took other precautions. After many weeks of anxious watching and waiting, at last unmistakable signs of disintegration appeared ;—the warning was flashed along the wires to the threatened areas, and presently the whole vast dam burst and crumbled away. A huge wall of water swept down the river, but so excellent were the arrangements that, although whole villages and a considerable town were absolutely destroyed, the loss of life was practically "nil." At this time the flood rushed through the town of Hardwar, depositing the sacred fish from the pool in the public streets and the dwellings of the inhabitants.

. . . .

And so, in process of time, passing upwards, we reached the home of the Great Gods. We were among the Bhotias here—people of Tibetan origin, interesting but extremely dirty folk, though considerable allowance must be made for the disinclination of people to bathe and wash in this bitterly cold country. They practically enjoy a monopoly of the carrying trade between Tibet and Hindustan; conveying their merchandise—principally borax, salt, and wool—on yaks, "jibboos," and goats over wild mountain-tracks and lofty passes. They sometimes call themselves Hindus, but, as a matter of fact, are more Buddhist as

regards belief. The men dress in home-made woollen garments somewhat similar to those worn by hillmen generally, but with usually a long frock-coat. The women wear a skirt, coat, shirt, and waistcoat, and a peculiar form of headgear going a yard down the back. They dress their hair in two long plaits, and they do not cover their homely, smiling, Mongolian features. Both sexes wear the curious Tibetan woollen boots with string soles. They talk a language of their own, but in the course of trade have learnt something of Tibetan and the dialects of the plains. Much interesting information regarding the origin, religion, and customs of this curious and almost nomadic race is given in Mr Sherring's work entitled 'Western Tibet and the British Borderland.'

The surroundings of the shrine at Kedarnath are very wild and picturesque. It owes its sanctity to the fact that here the great god Shiva, being hard pressed when fleeing in the form of a buffalo from the Pandavas, dived into the ground, but left his hinder parts exposed on the surface — to be adored for ever afterwards. And, indeed, a great piece of black marble, as much like the hinder parts of a buffalo as anything else, is there to this day. He married the daughter of Himachul. Not far off is a great cliff, from which in past times his votaries, and also lepers, threw themselves off to certain death,—a proceeding which has now, however, been stopped by the Government.

Leaving this locality and its savage grandeur, we passed over the intervening ranges to the village of Joshimath, where we abandoned our ponies, and travelling, *viâ* Pandkeswar, on a bad road where the path at one time was over slabs of stone resting upon wooden stakes thrust into crevices in a rocky wall overhanging a deep ravine; and again over a bridge of consolidated snow beneath which we could hear the roar of the water; we at length reached our goal — the wonderful shrine of Badrinath, where Krishna stood for a hundred years on one foot, with arms aloft, his garments thrown off, subsisting on air, and "emaciated and with veins swollen." It is situated in a long valley leading to the village of Mana and the passes beyond, and was built in the form of a cave and surrounded by a cupola, with a shining roof of burnished copper which looks like gold. In the winter the temple is buried under many feet of snow. It is of great antiquity,—rumour stating that a shrine was here a thousand years before Christ,—but it was nearly destroyed in recent years by an earthquake, and was almost entirely rebuilt. At one time no less than seven hundred villages belonged to the trustees of the shrine. Close by is a thermal spring giving forth steam and a strong sulphurous smell, and too hot to touch until its admixture with the cold water from another adjacent spring; and in the bath so formed, the pilgrims, men and women, bathe together, the wives knotting their

garments to those of their husbands—a repetition, apparently, of a portion of the marriage ceremony. The existence of this geyser among the Eternal Snows no doubt explains the original selection of the spot for the establishment of a shrine, for the phenomenon must appear miraculous to the simple dwellers in the plains. Its surroundings are sublimely weird and beautiful: the giant white mountains towering all round, a little gauzy cloud of driven snow hovering as ever round their summits as if to hide their mysteries from human view—the solemn silence—the absence of life save for flights of snow pigeons—the brooding stillness and the impression of infinite and illimitable space, —all combine to produce an effect upon the spectator which can never be forgotten. The traveller feels that it is holy ground, and to stand here on a moonlight night and to note the solemn and commanding majesty of Nature, inspires an emotion of awe and a sense of insignificance, probably nowhere else so fully realised. Milton's immortal lines on the Creation instinctively occur to the mind—

> "Immediately the mountains huge appear
> Emergent, and their broad bare backs upheave
> Into the clouds; their tops ascend the sky.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> For chaos heard His voice: Him all His train
> Followed in bright procession to behold
> Creation, and the wonders of His might."

Contrast this with what Max Müller gives in

'Sanskrit Literature' as a specimen of the Aryan mode of thought—

> "Yon bright sky
> Was not, nor heaven's broad woof outstretched above.
> What covered all? What sheltered? What concealed?
> There was no confine betwixt day and night;
> The only One breathed breathless in itself,
> Other than It, there nothing since has been.
> Poets in their hearts discern,
> Pondering, this bond between created things
> And uncreated.
> Nature below, and Power and Will above—
> Who knows the secret? Who proclaimed it here?
> Whence, whence this manifold creation sprang?
> Who knows from whom this great creation sprang?"

This is the spirit of the earlier Vedic hymns.

One seems not of this world—this work-a-day world—and nothing would surprise us. A mastodon might wander down the valley;—the multitude of holy Hindus who departed this life thousands of years ago, and who, it is alleged, reside in an inaccessible cavern in the mountain, might suddenly bear down upon us;—Krishna might appear in his uncomfortable attitude on a neighbouring peak,—and we should accept it all as perfectly consistent with our surroundings. It is—words fail us—very beautiful, very uncanny, and very cold.

We watched the pious pilgrims at their devotions, happy in thus reaching the summit of their hopes and desires, and offering money, bangles, and other ornaments at the shrine; and we received a visit from the Rawul, or high-priest,

who bound a muslin "puggri" round the writer's head. This last act of courtesy is probably connected with local custom regarding friendly arrangements and interchanges, for Badrinath is in Bhotia land, and the Marchas of Mana, who are connected with the temple, receive from the funds an annual payment of Rs. 50 in cash, forty pounds of grain, and one "puggri." "This is conditional on the fact that at the Janam Ashtami festival, when the idol is carried through Mana to be bathed at the waterfall and fed at the Mata Murati, the women of Mana, led by the Malpa women, clothed in festival attire, shall sing hymns in honour of the god." (Sherring and Longstaff.)

We purchased various articles as mementoes of our visit,—little plates of copper stamped with rude images of Vishnu—thorny sticks by which you may identify the wayfarer in the distant plains as one who has visited the holy spot—"saligrams," stones from which ammonites have fallen and left impressions, and sacred as emblems of the Preserver—and many other curious things. We were not comfortable, for every day the snow fell for hours; so that a fire was at once put out if lit in the open, and the tent was too small to have it inside. There was nothing for it but to go to bed to get warm until the weather cleared. Then there was a difficulty about getting carriage, and we might have been detained for a considerable time but for the resourceful strategy of Bhowan Singh, who made a party of woodcutters

gratuitously and gloriously drunk over-night, and then loaded them up and got them under way in the early morning while still obfuscated with the results of the orgy. From thence, crossing lofty ranges beloved of the "thar," or wild goat, and with slopes famous for "chukor," we reached the hill station of Almora a few weeks later.

It is impossible, after wandering with these pilgrims to these distant shrines, conversing with them, watching their patient zeal, and noting their confidence and hope under circumstances of much hardship and risk, to resist the conclusion that their beliefs are very real and deep-rooted, and that in their thoughts these people are very much what their forefathers were many generations ago. It is held by many (especially since the resuscitation of Mendel's views on heredity) that the natural disposition with which a child enters the world, restrained though it may be by caution and fear of public opinion from expressing itself in acts, remains nevertheless unaltered until he leaves it; and since a race is but an aggregation of individuals, it is conceivable that its intrinsic moral characteristics are modified with extreme slowness, and probably never to any important extent, despite the influence of what the French call the "milieu," unless the process is hastened and facilitated by fusion with other races differently constituted. The admixture between Western and Indian peoples is so slight as to be almost negligible. Many thinking people



Office Work in Camp.

wonder whether under the veneer of Western civilisation, the real nature of the Hindu is very much changed. In most cases the European manners and speech are put on very much like the European garments, and are discarded in the home with equal facility and relief. Even of those who cross the seas it is true, as was said long ago, "cœlum non animum mutant." The Hindu inhabits a mental world of which the matter-of-fact Western has little conception. From his childhood upwards he lives in perpetual dread of mysterious influences, the powers of malevolent gods, spells, the Evil Eye, &c. In his present state of knowledge he is unable to assign physical explanations for most natural phenomena, so that the unknown represents to him far more than it does to ourselves. He is extremely suspicious; which Bacon says is a defect, not in the heart, but in the brain. During the Mutiny, it is stated, when every other building in a town was sacked, no Indian entered a Masonic Lodge. There is hardly an action in a Hindu's life, indeed, which is not influenced by the fear of offending some deity, and this engenders a timidity and want of self-confidence which is quite distinct from physical fear. It is the old story of the bogey and the child—only the child never really grows up. He has certain gods concerning whose powers for good or evil he has no doubt whatever; and below these come godlets, shades and spirits, who may perhaps be cajoled or even deceived. And,

last of all, there are certain men towards whom his attitude is difficult for us to grasp. They are men undoubtedly, but they are something more than this—something that General "Jan Nikkleseyn Sahib" was to his soldiers—something akin to what the great heroes were to the Greeks—something which saints, "rishis," or even certain Brahmans, are to religious communities. They are not regarded as infallible, but they are not as other men. This attitude of mind is, of course, the natural outcome of a belief in incarnations, and the transmigration of souls or metempsychosis—a heritage from early Brahmanic times.

The late Sir Alfred Lyall (under whom the writer had the privilege of serving, and whose friendship he had the honour to enjoy) in 'Asiatic Studies' advances the theory that the new gods and demi-gods continually being recruited and introduced into the vast collection of deities in the Hindu polytheistic system, are commonly men who have been distinguished among their fellows when on earth by remarkable qualifications, such as valour, wisdom, asceticism, &c. Their reputation is originally local, and in life the general feeling of the people towards them is expressed in the phrase, "This man is the great power of God." When such a man dies, it is especially easy for a community believing in metempsychosis and reincarnations to conceive him as deified. If a saint or hermit, he is not burned but buried; a shrine probably arises presided over by a relative

or a disciple, and here miracles are presently reported to happen.[1] In course of time those who knew him on earth pass away, until his mundane career is forgotten and he only exists in the people's minds as a demi-god. As said before, he is originally a local deity, of whom the villagers are proud as being of themselves, and to be therefore especially worshipped as more likely to intercede for and help those of his own people. The increase or decline of his popularity will largely depend upon the visible results of predictions and prayers made at his shrine. The orthodox Brahman, the refined Vedantist of towns, looks coldly on these new recruits, but the local priest has to think of his livelihood and status, and when the reputation of such a saint becomes pronounced, it is not long before he finds an opportunity to give the rough unfinished superstitions regarding him some Brahmanical shape and varnish, and so it may sometimes happen in the course of time that the local hero, sage, or saint finds himself received

[1] Not only the tombs and shrines of Hindus, but sometimes of Muhammadans and even Christians, are so worshipped. The present writer knows of one such Muhammadan shrine very largely visited by Hindus. In past times many casualties occurred through the votaries crowding into the close unventilated tomb, but an astute official placed a large fan driven by manual labour (known as a thermantidote) behind the structure ; concealing it by planting a dense grove of shrubs round it—the blast of air being driven in to ventilate the building through a hole in the back wall. The reputation of the shrine has been much increased by the proceeding, since the cool fresh air in the interior is regarded by the simple villagers as the breath of the saint !

in or near the upper circle of the gods, and interpreted as an orthodox emanation. We know from Tertullian and Augustine that similar ideas prevailed in classic paganism. It can be readily conceived how Brahmanical influence is retained and extended by such measures.

This is not all. As the same author points out, men not only rise to be gods, but gods come down and exhibit themselves as "avatars" or incarnations, and natural phenomena. "In this stage of belief, the people construct for themselves Jacob's ladders between earth and heaven: the men are seen ascending until they become gods; they then descend again as embodiments of the divinities; insomuch that it may be almost doubted whether any god, except the Vedic divinities and the obvious Nature gods, comes down the ladder who had not originally gone up the ladder as a man, and an authentic man." Again, "That the two sources of theology meet and are blended together, there can be no doubt; the Nature god sometimes condenses into a man and is precipitated upon earth; the hero or saint often refines and evaporates into a deity up in the skies." The polytheistic religion is compared to a waterspout whereby a column is formed, of which the contents may appear to pass either from the earth to the skies, or from the skies to the earth.

Of course much mystic legend weaves itself about the name of a saint, or deified hero, in

the process of transition, and frequently the origin of a local deity or demi-god is absolutely obscured and lost in the course of time. There is a certain shrine upon a very old bridge in Northern India which is held in great esteem and veneration. The story runs that after the completion of the bridge, although it seemed perfectly sound every evening after repairs had been effected during the day, yet on the following morning a large rent in the structure invariably appeared. The efforts of the most expert engineers were futile in preventing this occurring, and in despair an appeal was made to the religious authorities, who recommended that a selected boy should be walled up alive in the persistent rent. This expedient was perfectly successful, and from some mixed sentiments, among which probably gratitude bore a very small part, a shrine was erected on the spot and the shade of the victim worshipped. Now while it is perfectly possible that a boy was so immured, it is unlikely that he submitted voluntarily to the proceeding or was in any way desirous of emulating Marcus Curtius, and it is much more probable that the whole story is a myth, and that the shrine was erected to some peculiarly gifted individual of engineering talent whose skill in permanently repairing an obstinate defect in a convenience affecting many thousands of wayfarers, raised him to an unusual height in the opinion of the local community. The idea of ensuring the stability of a structure by the sacri-

fice of a child still exists, and to give some notion of the credulity of the masses even to-day, it may be mentioned that a great falling off in the amount of vaccination performed in the neighbourhood of a large bridge then under construction, was traced to a widespread rumour that the Government was endeavouring to find an infant in whose veins milk ran instead of blood; as it had been advised that the burial of such a child under it would ensure the stability of a pier which, on account of the presence of a quicksand, was settling and causing much difficulty.

That the extensive existence of such views regarding the recruitment of deities and semi-deities leads to confusion and something like chaos in a system of religion is obvious, but nevertheless such a creed admits of an elasticity and comprehensiveness which is favourable to the maintenance of the same as a whole. The Hindu tree, with its deep roots founded on the Vedas, often throws off adventitious growths or "sports," but the priests of the order not only train and lead them back so as to still form part of the original stock, but, to pursue the analogy, even often actually so modify and adapt the plants of the jungle in its vicinity, that to the casual and confused eye the whole presents some aspect of uniformity, and suggestion of a common origin. The deities of other creeds, indeed, are sometimes adopted and absorbed. Buddha, for instance, has

been adopted as the ninth "avatar" of Vishnu. Brahmanism, in short, is astutely tolerant, throwing its ægis over the crudest superstition, modifying the same without offence, and requiring but a very moderate allegiance in return for its countenance.

From what has gone before, it might be assumed that a people holding such elastic theological views would be open-minded and receptive as regards mundane affairs; but in reality the very reverse is the case. This is due to the fact that a Hindu's religion, such as it is, is inextricably bound up with every detail of his existence. It is, indeed, more a great social system than a creed. There is hardly an incident in his daily life which is not mixed up with an act of worship or propitiation. What Westerns call customs are therefore much more than customs — they are almost parts of a ritual. The fact, of course, is generally known, but is not perhaps sufficiently recognised. Herein lies the secret of the great vitality of Brahmanism, and the principal source of the repugnance of its followers to the introduction of foreign innovations and ideas. It perhaps suggests caution in making attempts in such directions. We have no analogous conditions existing among communities in the West, experience of which would help us to predict how such novelties would be received and viewed in the East. We call these people unprogressive, ignorant, and what not, but

this is hardly fair. They are fully appreciative of the material advantages of Western discoveries and culture—as witness the popularity of railways, and the way in which various conveniences have been adopted;—but at the back of their minds is the dread that change may bring about the subtle disintegration of what constitutes the bed-rock of their beliefs,—the time-honoured social-religious system of their forefathers. And of course, as the Brahman well recognizes, such fear is well founded.

Democratic institutions and the retention of the caste system seem hard to reconcile, and the discovery of a *modus vivendi* far to seek. Many people, though perhaps not the best informed, think the last is doomed; but much water will run under the bridge before its disappearance. With its abolition, Brahmanism, that integral part of Hinduism, must perish. But we may remember that it has absorbed Animism, routed Buddhism, and emerged perhaps stronger than ever from the fierce persecution of Muhammadanism. Where, indeed, to-day its foundations have been destroyed, nothing imposing or substantial can be honestly claimed to have been built upon its ruins—the result too often is merely something like desolation. We see, it is true, some portents in the sky—revolts from priestly tyranny—the rise of sects basing their beliefs on the venerable teaching of the Vedas, &c.,—but what their fate will be still lies in the womb of the future. There

would be a strange irony about the fact if one of the earliest results of extended modern education were a return to the primitive religion of the Aryan invaders whose history is buried in the mists of the distant past!

The author cannot conclude this brief sketch of a journey in these mighty hills without a passing reference to the sad death of one of the party. Soon after his return, he received the following pathetic letter from Hari Dutt, dated from his remote hospital. "Honored Sir," it ran, "you will be sorry to hear that the yellow dog Génda which accompanied the Presence on tour, has gone into the belly of a tiger which comes here daily at night with its offspring." Alas! poor Génda.

XIII.

CONCLUSION.

The consideration of questions of administrative procedure in India is outside the scope of the present little work, and, moreover, the writer does not consider himself competent to deal with such a very difficult subject. It may be safely stated, however, that the task of those intrusted with the destinies of the Empire is at the present time far harder than it has ever been within the memory of living man. The "awakening of the East," so long anticipated, has now really commenced. Education is, of course, the ferment which has originated the processes, analytic rather than synthetic, of which we now see the inception; but in the vast crucible of the Orient are mingled such diverse and incompatible elements that what the consequent reactions will be, no man can positively predict. All that we can surmise is that if such processes be natural, they will, arguing from analogy, be slow;—with the advantage, however, of producing permanent results. It is perhaps a

recognition of this requirement that leads Western statesmen of a reflective mind to incline to wait upon events in this portion of the globe.

Although the progress of one Eastern nation has been startling in its rapidity and extent, it would be premature to conclude that the effect of this on other Oriental races will be so immediate or wide-spread as some people appear to suppose. India, for instance, we are informed by some unaccredited diplomatists pursuing their scholastic studies abroad, "awaits the help of Japan." But the rulers of the latter country are not possessed of any more altruistic sentiments than are held by politicians in other parts of the world; and are likely, moreover, in the near future to have quite enough to do in looking after their more immediate interests nearer home. Japan's own view of her mission in Asia, indeed, is, so far as concerns India, described by Mr Lancelot Lawton in his voluminous and interesting work, 'The Empires of the Far East,' as well represented by one of her leading publicists, Dr Shiratori. After referring to the probable rise in power of China, the latter writes: "But with India the case is different. India is a geographical rather than a historical name. Nothing like nationality or any kind of strong affinity exists between the myriad peoples who live side by side under British rule. It is hard to see how it is possible to form a united nation with the existing elements. Should India ever become independent, changes

requiring long periods must precede that consummation."

The awakening of China, again, seems to be an established fact, but, as has been pointed out, she has opened her eyes more than once before, and has again relapsed into slumber. She will doubtless come fully into her own in time; but the time, fortunately for the West (and possibly for her old old pupil), is not yet. Such at least was the opinion of the late Sir Robert Hart, than whom no better authority on the situation can be quoted. That the dry bones are stirring there can be no doubt whatever, and the significance of the recent revolution can hardly be mistaken, but, nevertheless, so long as the mild tenets of the Confucian philosophy retain any effective hold on the thoughts of the people, they will always serve as a useful drag upon any extreme or anarchic measures.

The impression conveyed from a consideration of the subject is that the progressive spirit all over Asia is at present largely confined to an enlightened, but, in comparison with the total population, small minority,—the real thoughts and wishes of the inarticulate millions are practically unknown. When the movement has become sufficiently strong and general to reach the lower strata of the masses and to bring them into the arena of politics, the results may be unexpected and disturbing. Progress, in this connection, it should be remembered, principally means an awakening

desire for greater material advantage and comfort on the part of the individual, and it may possibly be found that it is considerably easier to neglect the simple cultivator in his village than the educated workman in the factory. What the last-named may demand when his opportunity arises, no man can say. His views may be reactionary and disappointing—or even worse. While recognising, therefore, the futility of attempting to put back the hands of the clock, it is difficult to contemplate with anything like equanimity the release of such vast forces, concerning the nature and probable method of operation of which we are at the present time so absolutely in the dark. That we are, however, on the eve of great developments and changes is beyond question.

One important consequence of the bursting of their fetters, mental and geographical, by Eastern peoples, is that it is more difficult than ever to administer India as an isolated unit. Matters of high policy concerning this country so frequently dovetail into those of the Empire generally (as witness the position of Indians in South Africa and elsewhere), that they can only be safely dealt with from some standpoint from which the whole situation can be comprehensively surveyed; and, moreover, in these days of rapid transit and easy communications, such central control is much facilitated, and there is very little going on in the East which is not perfectly well known to the capable authorities in Whitehall. The "splendid

isolation" of India is a thing of the past—though not, indeed, of the very distant past. Regrettable as the occurrence of recent agitation and disturbance in India may be, it has at least served one useful purpose, and that is to clear the air, to open Western eyes to the real circumstances of our great dependency, and to thereby enable statesmen and the public to put a proper valuation upon the opinions and utterances of more or less instructed persons who until quite recently posed as oracles, and sought with marvellous self-sufficiency to direct the councils of the nation on Indian affairs. As all experienced officials know, the problem of how to best govern Oriental peoples bristles with difficulties; though we may fairly claim to have come nearer to its solution than any Western Power has ever yet done. The few remarks, therefore, with which the present writer has ventured to conclude this little work are made with great diffidence. They possess no novelty, for they merely embody the views held by nearly all officials when he first went to India, and he is only led to record them by the conviction, after thirty years' service in the country (recently concluded), that these opinions are just as sound to-day as they were when he first imbibed them, long ago, from his kindly wise old friends.

The officials of the old *régime*, both civil and military, who kept their districts loyal in the dark days of the Mutiny, or speedily reduced them to order and contentment after its suppression, were

certainly not obsessed with any lofty thoughts or purposes concerning the changing of the nature of the Oriental, but were simply resolute practical men, very high-handed it is true, but with a very full recognition of what is meant by *noblesse oblige.* They would have probably nearly all failed to satisfy the requirements of quite a merciful modern examination board. The directness of their methods would horrify public opinion in Europe at the present time; though it does not seem to have had the same effect in the East, for we know that at least one of our greatest military leaders, more distinguished for stern intrepidity than graceful urbanity, was actually canonised after his glorious death by the admiring members of an alien faith. The duty of these men was to do justice, collect revenue, and to keep their subjects (the term is used advisedly) satisfied and loyal—and it must be acknowledged that somehow or other they did it remarkably well. But they enjoyed enormous advantages over their successors to-day. When the bearer of Her Majesty's Mail ran, armed with a spear festooned with bells, over hundreds of miles of wild and almost untracked country, and not infrequently concluded his journey in the stomach of a tiger instead of in a Secretariat office, the Head of a district—the Collector and Magistrate, or Deputy Commissioner—had leisure and opportunity to wander in camp about his charge, and to really know, and be known to, the gentry and the masses. He lived for more

than half the year literally among the people. The white sheen of his tents was the sign that the meanest ryot could plead his cause, or lay his grievance, before the great "Sirkar" (or Government) itself—for to him the Head of the district *was* the Government. Only Anglo-Indians know how greatly such a privilege is valued in the East. He spoke, and really understood, the *patois* of the rural classes; he saw with his own eyes where revenue assessments could be justly enhanced or reduced; he knew the family histories of the great landowners with whom he rode and shot; he settled many quarrels and arrested much mischievous litigation with wise advice; and in numerous ways brought home to the simple folk the fact that the "Sirkar" was not only a definite entity, but also their friend. Incidentally, he could explain the benevolent purpose of a Proclamation or a Resolution, and interview (with less than his usual courtesy) any individual who had misrepresented its intent. The Indian is accustomed to personal rule, and loathes bureaucracy. Greybeards under the peepul-tree still love to talk of the "old sahibs" and their ways. What used to impress the writer was that the *office* of the eulogized individual was hardly ever mentioned—it was "Edwardes sahib," or some other stalwart of the past, who had gone down to posterity as a wise, strong ruler, in his own name alone. It was the *man* they followed—as they would (given the opportunity) again.

There is no doubt that, largely owing to force of circumstances, this desirable relationship between Europeans and the people of the land is no longer what it was. Of course there is still a good deal of touring and camping done, but far less than there used to be. The principal cause of this is the enormous increase of correspondence and other business more or less necessitating the presence of the District Officers (especially the seniors) at headquarters; but, it may be suspected, there is not the same liking for camp life as formerly existed. Ladies object to "living in their boxes" (whatever that means), and official recruits are not so much drawn from classes in which a love of sport is almost hereditary. Moreover, men do not stay long enough in their districts to thoroughly identify themselves with them, and to come to fully know their inhabitants and conditions. In many ways the influence of the Head of the district—the "king pin" of the administrative coach — and his assistants has been seriously reduced.

If the present little work has any purpose (apart from that of pleasantly whiling away the time of its compiler), it is to suggest the expediency of, so far as is compatible with existing conditions, reverting to the older system of making the personal element the principal factor in the local administration of India, and, by releasing District Officers as far as possible from clerical and routine duties, leaving them more time and leisure to mingle with

the people in their homes. It goes without saying that such officers should be most carefully selected;—mere seniority should count for nothing. It ordinarily takes years for a European to learn to think as Indians think, and to master the difficulty of ruling firmly and without offence. It is given to some men to do this almost instinctively—others never acquire the faculty. As a distinguished administrator once said to the present writer, "some men can do anything with Indians, and others nothing." It seems to be far less a question of intellectual attainments than of personal character. But, in any case, it is a *sine quâ non* in developing the informed sympathetic mental attitude so essential for success, that the official should possess an intimate knowledge of the language, religion, thoughts, and customs of the races among whom his lot is cast;—and this, the author believes, can nowhere else be so fully acquired as in camp. This was the opinion of the older satraps, and this the system upon which they worked;—and that is why so many of them could lead the people like a little child.

The watchword for rulers in India to-day, it is submitted, is to keep touch with the masses—not the noisy minority in towns, but the simple voiceless millions who live in the Silent India,—who constitute at least two-thirds of the total population, and who furnish (the fact is worth noting) the recruits for the Indian Army and Police. They represent a great latent power, at present

inert; but they are impressionable and credulous to an extraordinary degree. Despite untoward incidents here and there, there can be no doubt that the King-Emperor's recent visit has very largely dispelled the mist which hung over the land,—that vague feeling of suspicious uncertainty which is called "unrest." Every one now knows we do not mean to quit the country,—every one feels he is not forgotten by the powers that be. But we must, it is feared, make up our minds to regard the existence of sedition as one of the permanent and serious difficulties which the rulers of India have to face. It was always more or less there, though it feared to raise its head; but we have in recent times manufactured a convenient medium for its extended and vicarious exhibition. The disturbing element, however, is still comparatively small, and, given the requisite firmness, it should not be difficult to prevent its tainting the masses to any grave extent. The men on the spot should be able to do it; but, if the writer's views are correct, it is absolutely necessary to this end, it is repeated, that they should mix more freely with the people by constantly moving among them in the villages. Such progresses have been customary among Eastern rulers from time immemorial, and, if properly conducted, should cause no hardship in the matter of obtaining supplies, &c. It is often said that times have changed—and the fact is not likely to be disputed. But the *masses* have not changed—or very, very little

—and the thoughts and feelings of the rural classes to-day are very much the same as those held by their forefathers when the great administrators of the past established their strong and benevolent influence over them. Their aspirations, their ideas of proper government, and their conceptions of what goes to make life full and happy, are all totally different to those held by the so-called educated classes. Their modest craving, indeed, would seem merely to be left a little more alone. This attitude is perhaps rather disappointing to the reformer, but is part of a heritage, it should be remembered, which has been handed down to them from the distant past, and is consequently not easily to be disturbed. To the man in the street (not necessarily obsessed with altruistic sentiments, or particularly impressed with the necessity of taking up "the white man's burden") the position might appear to possess advantages for a ruling power. The point of view of the practical observer referred to is of course open to criticism. Still, there is the fact (to which he would probably attach importance) that with the Silent India contented, and its sons loyally serving under the British flag, we need have little fear for the safety of the Indian Empire.

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